

NATURE OF MEMORY STUDIES, PERSONAL OR CULTURAL?

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ABSTRACT

The magnitude of memory as an essential faculty of human beings was understood and admired from ancient times; later it was considered to be one of the most significant gifted abilities of man that could gratify the personal demands of the individual, as well as the requisites of society, in capturing past events and creating an authentic version of it. In recent studies, memory has emerged from the personal, individual realm and has converted into a collective and social matter, articulated by cultural agreements. Thus, like each discursive discipline, memory becomes the site of constitution, disjunction and allusion to past, bundled up with pleasure, desire and power, in order to make coherent and reasonable narratives that are determined by socio- cultural paradigms of a society. Accordingly, the existence of personal and subjective memories is an illusion and even the most private recalling of past events is articulated by social frameworks. This investigation is an analysis of the nature of memory that actualizes it from personal domains to cultural areas of interest.

KEYWORDS: Collective Memory- Cultural Memory- Identity- Personal Memory

INTRODUCTION

The function of memory in human affairs is so significant that many ancient cultures had gods or goddesses related to the concept of memory. Greeks for example called the goddess of wisdom and memory, 'Mnemosyne' who was the mother of Muses. This clarifies that the act of recalling past reminiscences was supposed to be an exceptional ability of human being that differentiated it from other types of creatures. Glorification of memory in recent debates includes not only the personal domains of memory, but the social domains of it. Interdisciplinary quality of memory ensures its acceptance as a cultural issue, since it is highly connected to the process of articulation of identity, in individual and collective levels. Emerging memory from personal domains and accepting it as an interdisciplinary cultural fact would create many political and social disputes. The haunting presence of past, which is infused with social demands to recall and preserve certified memories, would position memory in the heart of social attention. Nevertheless, this strong tendency among memory researchers to speculate memory from political, cultural and social perspectives is often mixed with an academic desire to construct laws. Institutionalizing memory and changing it to an academic issue would increase the risk of exclusion and selection in precise personal domains, as power relations are tied to cultural issues. This is reinforced by hegemonic social pressures to retain confirmative memories and exclude dissident voices. By implicating memory theories, the researcher would like to suggest the faultiness of current memory studies that glorify the presence of subjective and authentic memory; even the most private and personal patterns of recalling incidents is structured by socio-cultural practices,

established by each community to serve the social demands. To initiate the discussion, a historical background of memory is investigated in the next section.

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONCEPT OF MEMORY

Neath (1998) suggests that memory is a vital faculty of human beings, prior to all activities. It allows man to generate structural patterns and construct a mental picture of events, “a person’s identity and definition of self relies solely on memory, both for what the person has done, thought and believed and for what others have said” (p.1). The omnipresent and everlasting function of memory explains the eager interests of researchers, in understanding the nature of memory and the process of its performance. However, as many other concepts, there is not an objective knowledge about the function of memory. This makes the act of analyzing individual memories, in different situations, a very problematic task.

Epistemologically, memory like history is a type of knowledge. Both of them, equally, retrieve past; whereas, the parameters and criteria for evaluation of their accuracy, in parading truth are quite different. Recently, memory theories are among eclectic types of studies, in which various theories interact; they interact with different disciplines such as medicine, sociology, psychology, media and politics discourses. Each field of research profits its own terminology, regarding the issue of memory. For example, in psychological theories, words such as long term and short term memory, sensory memory, generic and autobiographical memory are proliferating (p.6). However, in the analysis of literary texts in cultural contexts, the major emphasis is on the discursive quality of memory that stands at the end of a spectrum, in which photographic memory stands at one side and amnesia stands at the other extreme. In this research, notions such as cultural memory, collective and individual memory and amnesia are investigated; their definitions are elaborated on, respectively.

A central key question in developing a theory for memory studies is the way memory is defined. One of the prevailing assumptions about memory’s nature is spatial thinking of it. It is, widely, believed that memory is a place or *loci* where information of one’s life is stored in. One of the common metaphors about memory is suggested by Aristotle who likens memory to a wax tablet; forming memory created a seal on the wax with a signet ring, “the durability of the memory depends on the age and temperament of the person, just as the durability of an impression depends on the age and malleability of the wax” (p.2). This illustrated the irregular nature of remembering an event; thus, generated the basis of modern studies of memory which put emphasis on the contingent and heterogeneous quality of memory.

Neath believes that another major early memory theorist was Augustine who classified memory into two general branches, sensory and intellectual memory; one was related to storing the images of the objects such as sound, taste and odor and the other was concerned with intellectual knowledge of literature, philosophy and science. Augustine imagined that memory is not a simple, passive act of recalling images, but it is an active, complex mental process (p.10). By mid-1950s, most of theories of memory borrowed their terminology from telephone systems, terms like short and long term stores. In the ‘structural view’ of memory, it is considered that

there is a place in which memories are stored and they are processes in the time of need. Later, a much progressive view, called 'proceduralist view' was presented by memory theorists, which underlined the creation and re-creation of memory in diverse patterns, in this method a more dynamic conception of memory system was agreed upon (p.3-4). This paved the way for modern and postmodern theories of memory, in which fashioning a coherent framework is impossible.

Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin (2003) scrutinized the progress of memory from ancient ages to the present era. This study illustrates that theorists of modern era were concerned with the complicated process of articulation of the 'self' who possesses memory and various social presentations of it, "the history of memory is indissociably linked, then, with the complex story of the emergence on to the historical stage of a bounded, coherent self who comes to be understood as the 'container' or possessor of memory" (p.3). This generated a controversial debate, whether to call memory a subjective or a public issue. What is apparent in most of modern memory studies is that it was believed to be an individual feature of every man and bringing it to the public zone caused many problems, because it was hard to interpret the personal feelings and memories of a person. To provide a better perception of memory, modern and postmodern definitions of memory are briefly scrutinized.

The difference between the modern and postmodern memory studies is mentioned in the introduction of *Regimes of Memory* as,

In contemporary memory studies, the focus falls not only on individual, private memory, but on historical, social, cultural and popular memory, too. Theorists speak with apparent ease, indeed, of the collective or social domains of memory. This contrasts strikingly with the early modern period, in which memory was the refuge of the individual and where the relation between that individual memory and the public sphere appeared fraught. (p.2)

The main difference between the postmodern and modern theories of memory dwells on the fact that the modernist concept of the personal domain of authentic, static memory has changed to a postmodern unauthentic memory where individual memory has the capacity to change into invention of events, to match the demands of social life. Memory is believed to adjust itself with the present condition of the recalling agent; therefore, in each moment of recalling past, memory produces a unique product, depending on the present demands of the individual.

Esther Leslie (2003) defines the heterogeneous nature of postmodern memory, in which the meaning of truth as an ultimate concept is undermined; it is compared with the conventional modern definitions of memory, "on postmodernist accounts, there is no continual, homogeneous truth and memory also follows the rule" (p.168). In other words, modernism confirms the fact that in modernity, the subject remembers differently. The modern era insisted, on one hand, on the permanence of memory and its traces on the mind of man; it approved the accuracy of the recalled memories. On the other hand, it demanded the individual to confirm the rule of necessity of forgetting past, according to Leslie (p.168). This dual demand of modern era in dealing with

memory paved the way for alternative thinking on the issue of memory. It resulted in formulation of dissident ideas of memory theories that rejected the conformist role of recalling. Memory changed to a political act that was used as an instrument of suppression or empowerment.

Unlike modern writers like Freud who believed that memories are personal entities, detectable through the repressed desires completely, the postmodern critics find it impossible to attain a continuous past, separate from social domain. By considering memory as a public issue, the power of society in attaining an undeniable kind of memory, which matches the desires of that society, becomes clear. Selection, exclusion and preservation of a certain variety of past, through memories of individuals of a society, are the main policy of postmodern societies. This process is attained in the name of glorification of uncountable versions of truth. Unfortunately, most of these memories, which claim to be true, are non-authentic and unreliable. There is an everlasting struggle in dominating an eligible type of memory in the society by suppressing the dissident versions of past narratives; and “memory becomes an act of survival, of consciousness and creativity, fundamental to formation and rewriting of identity as both as an individual and a political act” (Fortunati and Lamberti 2008, p. 129). It appears that, in postmodern era, in which relativity is overestimated in its utmost level, memory has converted into another field of scrutiny. In representation of past, personal authentic picturing of past reminiscences is undermined in favor of a public, distinct imaging of past. In this sense, memory is another faculty to create a sense of belonging and integrity in members of a society; and inevitably, it is tied with political acts and power relations. The next section of the research is an attempt to investigate the initiation of considering memory as a cultural discipline.

CULTURAL STUDIES OF MEMORY

Cultural study of memory has changed to an alluring, interdisciplinary field of knowledge, in which a variety of approaches may perhaps be distinguished and examined. In the preface to *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (2008), a brief historical background about the origin of such studies is provided. It is stated that cultural memory studies, coined by Maurice Halbwachs, has gone through enormous transformations and has changed into a remarkably interdisciplinary discourse, in which many disciplines are engrossed. Fields of history, social and political sciences, theology, psychology, media and many other fields are infused to enrich the concept of cultural memory (p.V). Designing a stable and homogeneous framework for memory studies seems to be an impossible task, due to the discursive quality of memory. Memory studies, in different areas of knowledge, intersect and blur into each other and make evaluation of borders of each field of discipline, quite obstinate.

Astrid Erll suggests that the issue of culture could be scrutinized in three dimensions, “social (people, social relations, and institutions), material (artifacts and media), and mental aspects (culturally defined ways of thinking, mentalities)” (p.4). These different cultural fields, which effect the foundation of memories of a society and its individuals, are in a perpetual interaction with each other and exist in two different levels of, “the individual and the collective or, more precisely, the level of the cognitive on the one hand, and the levels of the social and the medial on

the other” (p.5). Accordingly, even the individual stage of this type of memory is shaped by the cultural conventions of a society. Regarding the first level of memories, that is the personal and individual level, although the individual memories are related to the subjective tendencies to be recalled, the social demands and external factors play a central role, in the process of recalling. Two levels of cultural memories may well be differentiated from each other, but “in practice, the cognitive and the social/medial continuously interact Just as socio-cultural contexts shape individual memories, a ‘memory’ which is represented by media and institutions must be actualized by individuals, by members of a community of remembrance” (p.5). Finally, the different modes of remembering may exist in societies in the form of “myth, religious memory, political history, trauma, family remembrance, or generational memory” that create a disparate and contingent area of referring to past events (p.7). This highlights the significance of cultural standards of a society in articulating the personal and collective memories of its members. Co-existence of various types of memories that interact and compete with each other, in formation of personal and public memories would result in a complex network of memories, each recalled with a unique and different process. Thus, even the modes of representing recalled objective facts are determined by a very complicated cultural procedure. This reciprocal process of displaying memories is also influenced by power network; therefore, politically confirmed memories are permitted to operate within the social context and the dissident reminiscences of past are excluded.

Not only defining criteria for memory studies seem to be problematic, but defining culture is equally an intricate mission; because, its influence is omnipresent in the life of man. To initiate the discussion on the cultural aspects of memory, it is a good idea to start by a general definition of culture. One of the exigent tasks, in initiating studies, based on cultural approach is delineating the notion of culture. Many have contributed their ideas on this subject; however among them, brief ideas of T.S Eliot, Ezra Pound and Raymond Williams are going to be included, as pioneers of cultural critics. Nevertheless, there are many more who have devoted their studies to this issue, but since the subject of this research is the notion of cultural memory, many of these explanations are omitted. Eliot’s and Pound’s mature works are extremely concerned with upholding culture. Rebecca Beasley (2007) examines disparate meanings of culture in works of Eliot, Pound and Hulme. She believes that, “whether we agree or disagree with their definitions of culture and their recommendations for its protection, their insistence on its importance for all parts of society is one of the most valuable elements of their legacy. Both poets wrote treatises on culture: Pound published *Guide to Kulchur* in 1938; Eliot published *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* in 1948. But what do they mean by this famously difficult word? For Eliot, culture is ‘a way of life’, which includes ‘all the characteristic activities and interests of a people’” (p.105). This would take into the account all the social affairs of people and the interplay of hidden codes of culture, in their life. According to Eliot, religion and its rituals played a key role, in comprehension of the idea of culture in one community. Everything in a society represents a relation to the idea of culture and more than anything else the culture of people in ‘incarnated’ in its religion (p.105). Surprisingly, the indicative list of activities that Eliot embraces in the field of cultural acts, are ordinary and mundane affairs of man that are rooted in religion. Nonetheless, Eliot (1967), in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, reflects on the pivotal role of geographical position and its relation with the notion of culture, “a culture should be analysable, geographically, into local cultures’ (p.15). He strongly acknowledges the existence of diverse systems of transmission of

local and national culture, through generation, living in a certain ancestral region (p.52-8). This could be depicted in Eliot's obsession to name a particular place, in *Four Quartets*. Consequently, Eliot is, philosophically, looking for traces of culture in the life of English people, under the light of Christianity. In *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, he confirms the heterogeneous procedure of generating innovatory cultural disciplines, "the vital importance for a society of friction between its parts" in fabricating creativity and refusing totalitarian authority (p.58-9). Beasley asserts that despite Eliot's attempts to relate parts and parcels of life by cultural local regulations, "his association of culture with religion, and English culture with the history of the Anglican Church, leads Eliot to aspire towards a society based on Christian principles" (p.107). This, again, accentuates the role of religion in creation of cultural paradigms.

On the other hand, Pound explores the origin of culture, not in religion but in philosophy. For him, the value of Christianity in West has taken the place of philosophy in the routine interactions of life. Philosophy lost its worth among ordinary people and changed into the language of intellectuals and scholars. Beasley suggests that,

By the twentieth century, he laments, philosophy is thought of as highbrow, 'I mean as distinct from roast beef and the facts of life, as distinct from the things that come natural'. However, in the East, philosophy, in the form of the teachings of Confucius (551-479 BC), remained integrated with daily life, and Pound recommends Confucian values as a basis for culture, as Eliot had recommended Christianity. (p.105)

This signifies that the definition of culture is all-encompassing and anti- intellectual, for Eliot and Pound. Accordingly, the definition of culture, the academic knowledge diverges with the ordinary designation of it, among ordinary people.

Unlike Eliot and Pound who confine definition of culture to some particular fields, Raymond Williams(1989) points to the inclusive definition of culture that has been elaborate in his another influential essay, "Culture is Ordinary"(1958). He believes that culture would be the mundane way of life and the socio- cultural signification of meanings, based on special presentations in media. However, like many cultural subjects, distinguishing these two aspects of culture is impossible; in multi-cultural present societies, in which meanings and significations circulate and reproduce, continually, offering a discriminating categorization of culture is unfeasible. According to Williams, every human community has its own structure and significations that are represented in institutionalized frameworks; therefore,

A culture has two aspects: the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested. These are the ordinary processes of human societies and human mind, and we see through them the nature of a culture: that it is always both traditional and creative; that it is both the most ordinary common meanings and

the finest individual meanings. We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life-the common meanings; to mean the arts and leanings- the special processes of discovery and creative effort (p.4).

Based on this quotation, culture would be incorporated in all human affairs and our activities are involved in cultural realms, consciously or unconsciously. It appears that man is the product of his surrounding culture and reshapes constantly by his new experiences, as well as the produced pictures of the dominant hegemony of his historical arena. This would locate the interdisciplinary issue of cultural memory in the heart of this discussion. However at the end of this article, Williams concludes that the culture is at permanent flex and expands based on different economical and social status of our society.

Eventually, the researcher intends to present a very inclusive definition of culture by Raymond Williams, which has been quoted in Stuart Hall's "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms" (2003), in order to pave the way for the discussions on the inevitable relation of memory and culture. Based on Williams' idea, the issue of culture is a very ambiguous one, as it contains all human activities, "we must suppose the raw material of life experience to be at one pole, and all the infinitely complex human disciplines and systems, articulate and inarticulate, formalized in institutions or dispersed in the least formal ways, which 'handle', transmit or distort this raw material into other" (p.198). Therefore, recalling memories of past could be classified as a cultural subject of contemplation, because in recent era, the tendency to bridge memory studies and culture has been proliferating. Majority of recent studies concentrate, mainly, on the public and social dimensions of memory and refer to the act of recalling as a cultural activity that is affected by social paradigms. However, the personal aspects of memory are not undermined by these theories and personal memory studies also contribute to the expanded field of memory studies.

There have been many debates on the cultural nature of memory and this research profits the analytical paper of Radstone, "Memory Studies: For and Against" (2008). It furnishes this investigation with valuable information about the significance of memory, as a discursive discourse. Previously, there was a tendency to call memory studies and all institutionalized cultural studies, a free political zone by some critics; whereas, Radstone thinks that memory is a field, in which political interests and academic research are combined. Radstone suggests that by including the concept of ethics in memory studies, questions such as the nature of traumatic events and witnessing emerge; this would shift memory studies into a 'transdisciplinary' field of study. As a result, the politics of memory is generated. Memory studies are now in the centre of the political debates, including the ever-presence of past in the life of individuals, reinforced by issues such as migration, exile (p.32-3). The multi-layered quality of memory establishes a wide range of possibilities in formulating a cultural reading of past, in literature. This significance is highlighted by engagement of other factors such as migration. Usually, the politics of recalling might be speculated distinctively in the context of migration, in which dislocation from origin plays a fundamental role in articulation of individuals' life.

Radstone believes that most of contemporary critics are now sentient to memories' power in personal and public domains of life. The social critics, for example, started to study the impact of recalling past in the survivors of traumatic events, whereas the feminists, as mentioned by Jo Spence, "embraced the capacity of 'memory work' to investigate, interrogate and even, ultimately, transform relationships with remembered selves" (as cited in Radstone 2008, p. 33). There may be many different motivations involved in diverse tendencies for memory studies, but in the case of immigrants, the popular and collective feature of memory, in portraying the burden of past, may be the main reason. Such studies, "demonstrate particularly sharply three linked features of much memory research: its urgent and committed engagement with varied instances of contemporary and historical violence, its close ties with questions of identity – and, relatedly, with identity politics – and its bridging of the domains of the personal and the public, the individual and the social" (p.33). Emerging memory from individual, ethnical and familial spaces and entering it into a more academic and "transdisciplinary conceptualizations" triggers questions about the nature of recalling and authenticity of recalled memories. The main risk of changing memory studies into academic subjects lies in the fact that the process of 'institutionalization' of studies means rigidifying the investigations into a pure object of study that results in making facts (p.34). This is exactly what happened to the discourse of history. By considering history as an objective knowledge that could be analyzed by academic researches, the subject of history was institutionalized by dominant discourse; thus, the outcome of the documentation of history was determined by the benefits of authority. Preserving memory in personal sphere is one of the ways to protect it from institutionalization and as a result to preserve it for marginalized groups. This need is intensified in migration context, in which the social and racial demands of immigrants are ignored largely by dominant groups. Remarkably, it provides a fertile ground to practice literary possibilities of the process of recalling, in the form of migratory memory narratives, for writers.

The diversity of the function of memory and the existence of personal, cultural and social memory along with the contingent interaction of the concept of memory and history introduced many "imaginary topographies of memory", which share the same language (p.36). The diversity of memory studies and its relation with other areas of humanities such as trauma studies or ethical studies, transforms memory into an interdisciplinary field of knowledge, where the aim is to "celebrate its irreverence, its unpredictability and its quest for connections amongst areas within which common ground has previously remained invisible, unexplored or unrecognized" (p.36). But interdisciplinary nature of memory creates a risk of transient definitions, in many fields that result in controversial contradictions.

To speculate memory is to consider the fact that cultural studies are the ambivalent fields of investigation, in which creation of a homogeneous theory is impossible, because "a cultural movement or practice is never straightforward or without internal contradiction – it is always a field of struggle" (p.37). Consequently, there would be a sharp amount of discrepancy in formulating a unified cultural structure for memory studies; nevertheless, by allocating the focus on literary performance of memory, a slightly coherent framework may possibly be achieved. Having this in mind, the researcher investigates different definitions of memory, in the next sections of this research.

TYPES OF MEMORY

The modern theories of memory have agreed upon the fact that memory is an individual faculty that has no effect on the social affairs. This has undergone a dramatic change in postmodern era, in which the function of memory as a 'discursive discourse' is considered to have an enormous impact on constructing the basis of a society. Here, different types of memory and recalling trends are studied. In the introduction of *Cultural Memory Studies* by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning, two different levels are suggested for memory. Individual and collective memories are two types of memory, enhanced by man. It is suggested that individual or personal memory is a subjective instrument in creation of meaning, rather than a public issue of interest. But even this biological concept is not detached from social domains, because most of the times our memories are articulated by external forces, beyond personal domains such as media, literature and art (p.5). This explains an updated reality about memory; the fact that memory has a decisive role in articulation of identity; therefore, the notion of self and subjectivity is shaped by the act of recalling past memories. Accordingly, the 'self' must create a link between the past 'self' and the present one, through the faculty of remembering, in which even the personal identity is fashioned in midst of a society (p.6). The reciprocal procedure of performance of memory in society and its articulation intensifies its part as a cultural issue. As mentioned by Tabatabaei Lotfi(2014),

Memory is reactivated in a particular manner that results in production of a novel version of event; its development is determined by present demands of individual or its society. The controversial status of memory and its omnipresence expose it to diverse sets of interpretive acts. Nonetheless, there are conscious or unconscious processes at work to structure the appropriate frameworks, in recalling. These activities are shaped by socio-cultural, political or ideological paradigms of a community (142).

National tendencies and patriotic prejudices are among the significant factors in formulating the notion of 'self' in a society. This, equally, is responsible in containing or suppressing a certain variety of memories. Currently, the trends of memory studies are moving toward displaying a socially constructed image of past; memory provides the raw material for this image. A considerable number of memory researches are regulated by suppressive powers to confine memory into controlled field of knowledge.

Another type of memory is collective memory that could be expanded to national identity. The function of collective memory in formation of group and national identities is such a significant one that many critics consider the establishment of identity to be originated from the collective memories of a group; it, then, actualizes in the form of identity. According to (2004), the way we remember is the basis of who we are and this is administered by creation of certified narratives, "such narratives form 'master frames' and are passed on through traditions, in rituals and ceremonies, public performances which reconnect a group, and where membership is confirmed. Within this process, 'we' are remembered and 'they' are excluded" (p.162). This accentuates the power of memory as an instrument of suppression; in this process the demands of a supreme group is preferred and preserved; and memories of marginalized sections of society are ignored.

The narratives that individuals create as their personal memories may not be wholly their own encounters, but the construction of identity is in close connection with an effort to create an integrated sense of ‘self’, based on present social demands. This never destabilizes the position of individual memories in formation of identity, but it means that in order to make sense out of incidents, the individuals must locate themselves in accordance with memory, creating a consistent narrative, in order to satisfy social desires.

Jan Assmann (2008) discusses the significant role of memory in the process of creation of identity. It is suggested that the process of formation of identity is, highly, a cultural activity; and substantially, it is in close relation with recalling past. The procedure of articulation of identity, based on memory, is a dynamic process and it is in interaction with many systems of beliefs, politics and ideologies. This would endanger the validity of shaped identities, because it is always prone to generating illusionary identities, by individuals. Assmann states that, “memory is an open system. Still, it is not totally open and diffuse; there are always frames that relate memory to specific horizons of time and identity on the individual, generational, political and cultural levels. Where this relation is absent, we are not dealing with memory but with knowledge. Memory is knowledge with identity –index” (p.113-4). Based on what Assmann believes, the articulation of identity is an evolving process that is highly related to the action of recalling past. In this way, memory generates a sense of belonging for the person who remembers; and thus, it becomes a social demand. In order to belong to a certain group, the individual must remember according to the conventions and traditions of that society; and this emerges memory and identity formation from personal spheres of culture into social zones.

Many critics such as Nicola King(2000) believe that demands of a society for an assured kind of past, in the form of memory, means that the identity is not an innate concept, but it is articulated in the society, based on the present conditions of society,

It is not only nostalgia for a particular version of the past, but also nostalgia for a *certain kind of memory*, one which would enable an unmediated access to the past and the restoration of lost continuities. This discourse also implicitly sets up an opposition between a notion of identity as natural, organic and instinctive and one imagined as mechanical, forced and constructed. (p.29)

Like all other discursive discourses that are motivated by networks of external and internal relations, the discourse of memory is exposed to many different systems of beliefs. Regarding the notion of memory as an inter-disciplinary discourse, shaped by different forces rather than an isolated system of thought, would suggest the multi- layered nature of memory. The poly-structural framework of memory studies points out the fact that it is capable to dispute or confirm with many different systems of thoughts, simultaneously. It explains the contingency of the discipline of memory and its various impacts on formation of identity. Identity of a group is articulated based on certified types of memory, selected to be remembered in a specific way. Therefore, existence of social and political turmoil and clashes are the natural product of heterogeneous quality of memory.

Accordingly, unlike the current memory studies that glorify the existence of subjective patterns of recalling memories, the researcher would like to suggest that there is no private memory and even the personal incidents of one's life are structured and narrated and thus recalled in a pre-established socio-cultural framework.

CONCLUSION

This investigation is an analysis of the nature of memory that emerges it from personal domains to cultural areas of interest. The poignant existence of past, in the present, which is infused with social pleas to recall and maintain certified memories, would situate memory in the core of social contemplations. Multi-dimensional quality of memory and its contingent role in generating individual and communal identity is the key to ensure the social domains of memory studies. It was indicated that different levels of memory are influenced and constructed by cultural paradigms of a society and thus, served to generate discontinuous type of identities. Consequently, personal memory is an illusion and very version of recalling past is articulated and fashioned by social patterns.

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