

Social Selection and “Inter-Interestedness”: Negotiating Memory and Trauma through Speech-Act and Performance

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The most distinguishing aspect of human existence is the fact of having to deal with and navigate through memory which is a sum total of one’s lived experiences and one’s inherited knowledge. Man’s relationship with and reaction to the socio-cultural milieu in which s/he lives is always mediated through these experiences. Memory operates like a fine shock to the human consciousness during the process of decision-making by generating diverse situation-images of the aftermath. Needless to say, this immensely impacts the decisions that are to be taken.

Currently, Humanities is witnessing a surge in Memory and Trauma Studies mostly because of the renewed interest in the importance of mental health in human decision-making which in its turn decides human success in the game of social-survival. Since human decision is the product of the ability to identify the right path to follow and the correct way to propagate it, we need to understand how such choices are actually dictated by memory. Memory, being essentially personal and individualistic in nature, works like a double-entendre by connecting and alienating man at the same time with and against its surroundings. Memory here becomes a tool of social selection of the fittest who are found eligible to survive, succeed and splurge in the cultural framework we inhabit. “Inter-Interestedness” of human beings here becomes the key in negotiating the divergent pulls of memory.

In the proposed talk, I will try to elaborate on the concept and organization of “Inter-Interestedness” which aims at an inclusive enabling of man as a social being. I will also discuss the phenomenon of Social Selection which is being seen as the new-age human evolution in which memory has a decisive role to play. In doing this, attempts will also be made to see and show how man can actually process and deal with memory through various speech-acts and performance of identities.