INTRODUCTION

The past is full of life, eager to irritate us, provoke and insult us, tempt us to destroy or repaint it. The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past. They are fighting for access to the laboratories where photographs are retouched and biographies and histories rewritten... The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.

-Milan Kundera

The above statement adds a new dimension to the meaning of memory and its representation. This dimension has intrigued several researchers who initiated numerous theories revealing a relationship between memory and re-presentation. Thinkers and scholars have been actively deliberating on a more social and collective comprehension of the past and its modified commemoration through representation in the age of information. The spectacular memorials such as museums, archives, monuments and even the acts of renaming streets and buildings assist societies to reconstruct the narratives of the past and integrate them into the present. These narratives basically rely on the rhetoric of past metaphors and images. Nevertheless, it is not merely museums and memorial sites which practice the act of memorializing but also art and literature which are vital mediums of reconstructing and retrieving memory.

Questioning the politics of memory and the process of memorialization of the past narratives as manifested by various mediums, memory studies highlight issues such as whose memories are pursued, alleged and commemorated in the social domain. What complications and complexities do past events bring for those struggling to commemorate and epitomize them? Do the narratives that define us accurately portray or manipulate the historical reality? How is a traumatic event interpreted by an individual or popular imagination? How different cultural products can be read as a form of memorial? Memory stands at the heart of all
memorialization, and the present thesis has tried to study the ways in which form impacts memorialization vis-a-vis the process of creating and evoking individual and collective memories especially the past which is beyond the subjective, anecdotal and an empirical narrative which is both political and traumatic. The present study has made it convenient to understand how different modes of representation affect our understanding of the past.

I

While the present thesis dwells primarily upon memory, the memorial and memorialization are the key concerns to be analyzed. Further, it would be rewarding to understand the distinct memories of terror and violence that have been haunting individual imagination and collective mourning over a period of time. Thus, there are certain questions that need to be examined and problematized rather than merely assumed as given.

Memory is not merely an entity created by individual minds but an assorted and fluctuating collection of cultural artifacts and collective traditions/practices and events. Consequently, on one hand, it proffers collective memory and on the other, hand it provides cultural knowledge. In the act of memorializing, there are specific numeric, persons, and events that evoke past memories and instantaneously whose recalling becomes extemporaneous and instinctive to the affected group. Such acts and rituals become memories, and these memories are, at times, counterfeit to, and sometimes, reflective of to a supposedly shared and self-evident history. The narratives of historical events based on metaphors and images of past, offering general and practical lessons about groups, their motives, and opportunities. Nevertheless, it is comparatively easy to remember and commemorate for those who are unwaveringly affected by violence, who can draw upon their own experiences of the event to recollect. However, it is more intricate to scrutinize the commemoration practices for the individuals unfamiliar with the event and who have no inherent memories/experiences to draw upon. Thus, it is essential to catechize how an event is remembered and memorialized, primarily when those who have no first-hand experiences of those traumatic pasts.
It is also imperative to note that memorialization does not just dwell as an individual practice, but also serves broader social purposes through interaction between different individuals and social groups, making the memorial, a dynamic and a highly signified site. Rituals of mourning, the most basic and core motivation for memorialization of a tragic event of a wider social magnitude, involves the remembrance of lost ones through recalling what happened to them. In constructing an identity for ideological or political purposes, the state appropriates memorialization through the creation of a collective memory by offering a comprehensive and official narrative. The official narrative can be the truth a mourning individual is looking for, which is often transmitted through generations, sometimes even unconsciously. The narratives consist of the identifying elements that should be remembered, leaving out the dissonant elements that should be forgotten. First-generation memory involves personal experience with the events, and therefore has an enormous impact on the receiving end. This influence diminishes over the generations while it is still tangible for second-generation memories, after three generations the memory becomes genealogy, ancestry, and recollected history. In the same vein, the first-hand memories through time evolve to become remembrance and, eventually memorialization and history. I will be tackling the politicization and, eventual, interspersion of individual and collective memories to investigate the different ways in which the events of Operation Bluestar and the consequential post-1984 circumstances that followed have been represented in various creative media. I will also briefly look into the impact of the commemoration of Operation Bluestar and post-1984 political and cultural changes on contemporary times, particularly, in the Sikh community.

In the context of Operation Bluestar, also hailed as the third Ghallughara (Holocaust) in the Sikh history, it is the trauma that holds sway over memory and is central to an exploration of how the numerous individual memories, contemporary accounts, historical documents, and art converge to create collective public memories. After more than three decades, the narratives of Operation Bluestar and its aftermath have traversed their path through media in the age of information. Authors and reporters are not only penning down others’ trauma, but are also sharing their own narratives based on their own experiences and witnessing. In addition to partisan
interpretations of the Indian government’s assault on the Golden Temple, numerous notable literary accounts depicting the 1984 events that shape the popular imagination have been produced and circulated since the date of occurrence. Public and personal commemoration often seeks to usually re-enact or revisit the past in order to assuage the pain.

While remembering a particular event, different locations of memory and commemoration are indispensable for understanding the processes through which the memory of the critical event is structured. Henceforth, the same dark transmission sites and artifacts can have different meanings and impact on each receiver, reader, or spectator. On the day when the tragedy occurred, many hundreds, possibly thousands, were killed in the assault, including Bhindranwale as well as Sikh and Hindu pilgrims caught in the crossfire, and the complex was badly damaged. The assault led to the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister, by her Sikh bodyguards, which provoked the massacre of about 3,000 Sikhs by mobs in Delhi alone. Punjab, the north-western state that is the historic homeland of the Sikhs, was thrown into a state of violent insurgency that lasted almost a decade (Who are the Guilty?).

The present thesis is an attempt to understand the concept “memorialization” and questions how different mode of arts and representations become a kind of prosthesis of human identity based on the memory and the commemorative. Forgetting or repressing a traumatic event, however, does not erase its memory or its evidential occurrence, which continues to survive. Therefore, forgetting entails negative consequences for the transformative project which may result in the cultural integration of past events. On the other hand, memorialization may have a positive impact by confronting the trauma and thus, precluding its recurrence. Thus, although banished from the textbooks, the violence of 1984 is preserved in the archives of the survivors’ memory and memorial sites. The turbulent year of 1984, that reached its violent climax through Operation Bluestar in Punjab, is a subject of several memorializing events organized both in Punjab and overseas. Most of these are either political or sectarian and fail to capture the experiences of the common people during the heyday of militancy in Punjab. Both the state and the radical religious establishments have blamed each other for the incidents leading to the events in 1984.
Prior to 1984, only a few Sikh organizations were involved in intense and separatist violent doings such as the All India Sikh Students’ Federation (AISSF), the Babbar Khalsa and Akhand Kirtani Jatha, with formal association with Dam Dami Taksal and Dal Khalsa respectively. The insurgency in Punjab originated in the late 1970s, as some Sikhs, including Khalistan proponents, turned to militancy. The roots of the insurgency were very complex with the primary factors being inadequate recognition of Sikhism and the Punjabi language and mistreatment from the Indian Congress Government since its formation in 1947. The separatist violence began to intensify in the late 1980s when recruitment to armed groups or organizations began to rise. Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1984 led to a manifold increase in violence in Punjab. During this period many laws were enacted providing the security forces with extraordinary powers to deal with the armed groups. However, these acts were misused by a section of the security forces to hound and harass common people, in many cases for their own ulterior motives (The Indian Express, 6 June 1992 p 5). This resulted in a situation where a large number of young men in the age group of 18-22, fearing arrests, torture, and elimination in police custody ran from their homes and joined militant groups.

In contemporary times, memory studies have been trying to deliberate issues such as how different modes of memorializing communicate a collected social/public memory of trauma to those who did not have the first-hand experiences of the event. Specifically, the theories of memory and its transmission have attended to the traumatic after-effects of the event that might be felt by those who did not experience one which might actually incite remembrance of a kind in the generation. By problematizing the concept of postmemory this argument encourages making more vigorous the idea of memory. The museums, memorial sites, and artifacts articulate a sense of hurt and torture, for which memorialization cannot substitute. As James Young rightly considers that such forms articulate a null and void, inner way, they represent archaic and lost past experiences. This loss provokes that particular experience in those who visit and remember at these sites a sense of shock, perhaps something like trauma. According to Young, it is this shock that incites remembrance.
of things not witnessed, be a vicarious or secondary witnessing, and it is these structural and representational memorial forms that act as channels of pain and loss. Although this memorial concept, not just limited to architecture, is designed for traumatic memory, it is a concept that needs thinking through carefully, as the theorization of second-hand witnessing that attends such memorial forms runs the risk of universalizing trauma and displacing the historical specificity of the experience of the traumatic pasts.

Memory plays a noteworthy role in repositioning the past in the contours of the present. Even after three decades of the attack on the Golden Temple, many Sikhs and non-Sikhs around the world remember this event as the most brutal act of violence in the pages of Indian history. Personal accounts, testimonies, memoirs are given meaning within social frameworks and are collectively and culturally constructed. The public could not erase it from their collective memory for a variety of political and religious reasons. In literary studies and culturalist versions of psychoanalysis, the core proposition is that there are definite links between the inner world of memory and the external world of historical events which can be examined by concentrating on the experience of agony, pain, and the trauma of the past. Although aiming for a panoramic view, the pragmatic approach of studying collective pasts makes the finite meanings and characteristics of traumatic experiences more blurred and the specific nature of the pain and suffering which underpins traumatic experience becomes obscured.

Moreover, the word “commemoration” refers to the mobilization of symbols to awaken and preserve beliefs and feelings about the past. It derives from the Latin word “commemorare” which implies “to remember together”. Memorialization generally refers to the process and the act of preserving memories of people or events. It can be in the form of an address, a petition, or a ceremony of remembrance or commemoration (OED). The act of memorializing is a precariously complex act, especially when commissioned by the state. It becomes a highly politicized process that represents the disposition of those in power. It prescribes recollection in a way that memory becomes a by product of who wants whom to remember what. In this sort of recollection, memory is viewed as a subjective experience of a social group that
essentially sustains a relationship of power. While affecting the relationship of power within society, the act of memorializing has the potential to redress historical grievances and enables societies to progress. Like monuments, commemorations are repositories of collective memory and manifest power. Official accounts of collective memory and counter memories of artistic work exist in uncomfortable synchronicity. Commemorations are dialogic and it goes beyond multiple sites and individual memories. It occurs in the present and where the past is continuously modified and restructured and it continues to shape the future as well. As Michael Kammen significantly puts in *Mystic Chords of Memory*: “Societies, in fact, reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them, and that they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind manipulating the past in order to mould the present” (2). Memorialization is a practice that mollifies the yearning to honor those who ached, tortured or died during violence or religious/political conflicts. It can either promote social recovery after violent conflict ends or crystallize a sense of victimization, injustice, discrimination and the desire for revenge. Not accidentally, one of the central places in the cultural and historical works of recent years have taken the concept of “historical culture” or “culture of memory” as a significant factor in the process of identity formation of any community.

Memory is the sum total of what one remembers and gives the capability to learn and adapt from previous experiences as well as to build relationships. It is the ability to remember past experiences, and the power or process of recalling to mind previously learned facts, experiences, impressions, skills, and habits. The act and process of memory have been never predominantly ingenuous, how and what one remembers is colored by multiple facets. Always negotiating a tenuous relationship with the past, memory like art, becomes contextual and is essentially socially, historically, and culturally constructed.

In 2001, Jay Winter, the social historian, wrote an essay “The Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies” and claims that we need “a more rigorous and tightly argued set of propositions about what exactly memory is, and what it has been in the past” (3). Some scholars even question the existence of social and collective memory. The very idea of collective memory seems to assume a unity of purpose, as if many different people somehow share a common mind. James Wertsch has argued
in *Voices of Collective Remembering* that collective memory is not a thing in itself but many different acts of remembering, shaped by overarching social forces and cognitive frameworks such as narrative. Susan Sontag in her final book *Regarding the Pain of Others* went even further and argued that there is not a collective memory at all but there is “collective instruction”. Though many historians argued that the meaning people make from events is just as important as what actually happened. Humanities scholars are more concerned about how and what people remember, even when memory is sometimes insentient and blemished, or in cases where people have different or conflicting memories of the same event. What seems to matter most is how events and their consequences have impacted individuals personally or the collective at large. Even if the individual or social memories do not feature real historical facts and characters, they tend to put forth anecdotes or narratives that capture a historical period and context, and engrave a memory of the past in the narrative mode. Frequently, individual memory is an integral slice of the social or public memory. While recording history, memory becomes important as it stretches past a stream and an emotional meaning and knowledge that one just cannot get from most basic historical documents.

Recollecting historical acts of dominance, such as political or religious violence/conflicts, can therefore, have a range of disturbing and affective consequences on the individual and social consciousness, from trauma to shame to anger to cathartic self-recognition. Major events in history such as massacres, riots, acts of violence might be considered a catastrophe by those who were victimized. Remembering a period of turbulence allows societies to better understand the present and contemplate the future. Massive repressions and human rights violations might enable the transformation of individual memory to a collective memory. When painful historical events happen, there is a before and an after. Looking at the before could certainly help people think about how to look at or how to manage the after. This ‘after’ includes different elements like reconstruction not only from a purely material point of view but also psychological and emotional reconstruction.

While studying its social, cultural, and personal relevance, the essence of memory can be seen directly revolving around issues such as representation and identity, where their relationship and transmission turn out quite complex. The
theorists of memory studies raise vital questions concerning the modes, transmission, and contestation of memory. Although giant strides have been made in recent years in the field of memory studies, there remains an open question as to what extent historical past and events can be approached through individual and collective memory. As a social phenomenon, memory is always in an intimate relationship with cultural practices, tradition, and historical consciousness. It is one of the primary mediums through which identities are constituted, maintained and contested. Memory studies traverse multiple concepts such as collective memory, collected memory, mnemonic space, cultural memory, postmemory, and transverse memory, traumatic memory; these terms are typically deployed to highlight the social nature of recalling, constructing and commemorating past experiences. To completely understand the meaning of remembrance, the study is focused on a series of connected areas of memory studies that reflect the past events and the present identity.

While commenting on individual and social memory, Annette Kuhn opines that our personal whereabouts with the past are tenanted by a heady mix of private memory bits such as the personal photographs, and public representing the past, such as films or news photographs. Any clear distinction between these realms immediately becomes problematic when every day remembering is to be examined in terms of its practice. Alternatively, in perceiving popular memory as comprising the inculcation of remembering ‘I’ into a remembering, there is a pivotal requirement see the exteriorization of memory and its flow in social and public domains as involving a dialogue between the autobiographical memories of the “experiential I” and the shared cultural forms and processes of the “remembering we”. The concept of “personal cultural memory”, as suggested by Jose van Dijck, denotes the idea that the personally owned textual forms and objects such as photos, diaries, letters, souvenirs, and so forth - are able to “mediate not only remembrance of things past” but also “relationships between individuals and groups of any kind”. This informs that personal cultural memory focuses on the value of cultural items of any kind in coming mnemnonically between individuals and collectivities while also concurrently signifying tensions between private and public.

In the contemporary world, media, technology, and information, which have become increasingly important as tools of remembering, help to constitute a sense of the past, both in terms of personal remembrance and of history at large. It is because
of this “mutual shaping of memory and media” that, the concept places dual emphasis on individual acts and cultural norms in order to highlight its validity. Rather than viewing collective memory as a straightforward accumulation of individual memories, it can be seen as embracing the processes and practices of demonstrating the past as it is continually formed from the individual uses of cultural texts and objects within a particular social frame of remembering. This doctrine of Van Dijck defines cultural memory as the acts and products of remembering in which individuals engage to make sense of their lives in relation to the lives of others and to their surroundings, situating themselves in time and place. Memory, like the individual self, modifies over a period of time. As Richard Terdiman contends:

Memory functions in every act of perception, in every act of perception, in every act of intellection, in every act of language. So even framing the questions one might ask about memory being difficult. We might as well as attempt to see vision.

Terdiman’s analogy is even more appropriate in the context of an ocular-centric modern age distinguished from previous eras, perhaps, by the way in which the image serves to conclude as much as it reveals, just as memory as individual or collective prosthesis, as artificial, exchangeable commodity, made possible by visually based technology such as cinema, can be interpreted either as a barrier to “authentic remembrance” or as the only brand on the market. Although the practice of collective remembrance of violence and atrocities has always existed, there has been a rapid proliferation in all kinds of activities of collective remembrance of mass killings during and after 1984 in Punjab. Societies and individuals alike have almost all undertaken this predominantly social act that can be categorized in two groups: permanent sites (memorials, cemeteries, museums, artworks, transcripts, literature, even cinema) and impermanent gestures (ceremonies and street theatre). Studied from a historical, sociological and anthropological point of view, there is more or less consensus about the definition of memorialization: the practice in which individuals, communities, and societies interact at sites of symbolically represented memory, deriving from, and impressing on, an item or act narratives about specific times, places, persons, and events laden with affective meaning.
Collective memory is a kind of interplay of the present and the past in socio-cultural contexts. Though culture and memory are two different entities, both merge and intersect at two levels: the individual and the collective. In order to be as clear as possible about the sensitivities of the terms collective memory and cultural memory, we need to understand exactly how these two cultural concepts play out: socially framed individual memories and collective commemorative practices/representations. At a purely physiological level, memory is a matter of our neuro-mental system and a personal entity. On the social level, memory is a matter of communication and social interaction. Memory is not a matter of reflecting on the properties of the subjective mind, rather, memory is a matter of “how minds work together in society”, and how their operations are structured by social arrangements (Halbwachs On Collective 114). Barry Schwartz throws light on the social context of remembering and forgetting and observes that the earlier author promotes the idea that our conception of the past is entirely at the mercy of current conditions, and that there is no objectivity in events, nothing in history which transcends the peculiarities of the present.

In On Collective Memory, Maurice Halbwachs, the French sociologist, describes that a society can have a collective memory and that this memory is dependent upon the “cadre” or “framework” within which a group is situated in a society. Both individual memory and group memory exist and live beyond the individual sphere. Accordingly, an individual’s understanding of the past is strongly linked to the group consciousness. Collective memory is a collation of multifaceted individual and group memories which are primarily “constructed, assimilated and imbibed” with the help of various memorial forms. For Halbwachs, who accepted Emile Durkheim’s sociological critique of philosophy, studying memory is not a matter of reflecting on the properties of the subjective mind; rather, memory is a matter of how minds work together in a society, how their operations are structured by social arrangements. It is in a society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in a society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories (Halbwachs On Collective 38).

Social existence and membership offer the ingredients for memory and poke the individual into remembering specific past events and into disremembering others. People unify and comprehend events and concepts within a social context, thus they then recollect them in a way that rationally orders and organizes them through that
same cultural and social construction. Durkheim stated that “totems” offer a recurrent reminder of “effervescence” to members of the group. While expanding the idea of totems to include commemorative events that serve as reminders of a collective memory Halbwachs recommended that commemorative events are important to underline autobiographical memories that get stonewashed with time without periodic corroboration. While giving emphasis on groups, however, unlike Durkheim's societal frameworks of memory, the Halbwachian term collective memory, somehow, remains distant from the realm of tradition, transmission, and transferences.

Using the term “borrowed memory”, Halbwachs gives a way to the idea of extended memory, the memory we have of historical events that we did not experience and of which we received knowledge either through the state education, books, and parents or from other sources. This specific part of individual memory that is not really ‘ours’, is rather ‘borrowed’ from alternate sources. Likewise, he provides the notion of ‘Fata Morgana Effect’ which demonstrates the ways in which the exterior or the public memory can influence our own personal thoughts. ‘The Fata Morgana effect’ comprises memories of historical events, particularly traumatic events, which are most of the time directly and purposefully re-applied to contemporary conflicts for political benefits.

Every historical fact is transposed onto a memory figure to be substantiated by a specific place and time. Public scaffolding of various forms, in the physical, symbolic and social environment, can shape the specific form and content of the individual memory. Nevertheless, it does not remove the “individual” perspective from memories. Even though our memories are most of the time influenced by the society and the communities we function in, so these memories are simultaneously also induced by personal individual experiences. Indeed, social frameworks and memorial forms shape what individuals remember, but ultimately individuals do the remembering. The shared symbols and deep structures are real only insofar as individuals treat them as such or instantiate in practice. Collective memory is itself an expression of historical consciousness that derives from individuals. It maintains the lived experience of individuals within groups because that individual experience is never remembered without the reference to a shared context. Groups have no single brain to locate the memory function, although we persist in talking about memory as “collective”.

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The Halbwachian concept of collective memory has been explored and expanded from various angles. The culture of recollection pertains to staking out social horizons of meaning and time. It is in one's memory that one reconstructs past, and it is the culture of recollection that supplies us with numerous forms and means of relating to the past. Based on the writings of Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann discusses the possibility of collective memory as opposed to individual memory. Significantly, individuals are the carriers of a memory and it cannot exist without the social frames. Remembrance and recollections, even of the most intimate kind, are formed solely through communication and interaction within the scope of a social group. This implies that the individual can only remember what fits into the social frames of his or her present. Assmann's book, *Cultural Memory, Script, Recollection, and Political Identity in Early Civilizations*, lays emphasis on the idea of the culture of recollection as a form of social obligation determining the identity and self-assessment of a group.

Introducing the notion of “Cultural Memory”, Assmann makes a distinction between “Communicative Memory” and “Cultural Memory”. While the former one is related to the diffused transmission of memories in everyday life through orality, the latter refers to objectified and institutionalized memories that can be stored, transferred, and reincorporated throughout generations, in which speech is focused. Communicative memory limited to the recent past evokes personal and autobiographical memories and is characterized by a short-term tenure which can be from three to four generations. Cultural memory is characterized by emotive attachment as well as a deliberate reference to the past that overcomes the gap by allowing for both memory and oblivion. Assmann used the term “communicative memory” in order to delineate the difference between collective memory and cultural memory. Assmann’s idea of cultural memory cannot replace the term collective memory, but it is essential to distinguish between both forms as two different modi memorandi (ways of remembering).

In fact, every memory could potentially be at the same time considered individual, since it is shaped by the specific personal experience of that particular person. As Jeffrey K. Olick argues, there are two types of collective memory, the ‘individualist’ and the “collectivist”. The individualist is concerned with the neurological and cognitive recollection of the event or circumstance whereas the
collectivist is placed within deeper social and cultural aspects of public and personal memory. However, the individualist aspect of collective memory has been discussed in the subsequent chapters and the emphasis is given on the way it is incorporated in the collectivist approach which further discusses the particular influence of society on both personal and public memories. Furthermore, Olick makes an interesting distinction between collected memory and collective memory. On the basis of individualistic principles, their act of remembrance can be individual or collective. Any publicly available commemorative symbols are interpretable only to the degree to which they elicit a reaction in some group of individuals (Collective Memory 338).

Highlighting the durability and the symbolic aspects of cultural memory, Olick contends that cultural memory is formed by the symbolic heritage embodied in texts, rites, monuments, celebrations, objects, sacred scriptures, and other media that serve as mnemonic triggers to initiate meanings associated with what happened in past. In a way, cultural memory is the faculty that allows us to build a narrative picture of the past and through this process we develop a crucial image and identity for ourselves. Therefore, cultural memory preserves the symbolic institutionalized heritage to which individuals resort to build their own identities and affirm themselves as part of a group. In this process, the act of remembering is explicitly realized because its process and transmission involve normative aspects, so that “if you want to belong to a community, you must follow the rules of how and what to remember”.

While taking into account the significance of “sites” and “places”, Pierre Nora, the French historian, expanding upon Halbwachs’ instrumental presentism, states that collective memory is used by groups to interpret a past, and yet these memories become detached from the past. Nora further claimed that groups select certain dates and people to commemorate, deliberately eliminate others from representation (collective amnesia), and invent traditions to support the collective memory and the representations of collective memory are those that have been selected by those in power; collective memory is both a tool and an object of power. Nora claimed that as modernity emerged, traditions lost their social meaning and significance. As a consequence, he posits that elites in the society produced “simulations of natural memory” emerging as shared meta-narratives that supported emerging nation-states.
Both Halbwachs and Nora suggest that the Collective Memory of any group is actually a manipulated construction of those who maintain the power and status to define those memories. John Bodnar carries instrumental presentism even farther than Halbwachs. Bodnar states that public memory is not an accurate representation of the past, but is focused upon the needs of both the present and the anticipated future. The inclusion of the future to the present/past debate substantiates the premise of memory as a contested social construction that protects the power of the status quo. John Bodnar differentiates between vernacular and official representation. Vernacular memories originate from the people and are used to explain those events that most immediately impact the masses. Official memory is created for a purpose of stabilizing the status quo. The sanctification of the official memory suggests that a memory has been selected by some group that has obtained the power to represent and interpret these memories.

Since Nora claims that memory “attaches itself to sites,” critical scrutiny of memory discourses has centered on the content of and meaning assigned to designated “places of memory” (Realms of Memory 173). Yet, this thinking has sometimes reinforced the idea that life proceeds in one location and memory in another. These memory-sites, in turn, alter our understanding of the present and the effect of cultural artifacts. The collective memory of a group/community is represented in part by the memorials it chooses to erect. Whatever a community chooses to memorialize in the form of a physical monument, or perhaps more significantly, what not to memorialize, is an indicator of the collective memory. Collective memory is also sustained through a continuous production of representational forms.

The main point is that memory is not an evident property of some specific group, class or community. Neither it exists in some sort of public remembrance nor is it consciousness rather remembering is arranged and mottled by particular cultural practices. This is what contributes to the social communication and discourses of memories but on the other hand, there are features of remembering which can only be experienced on an individual level. This temporally oriented perception is not something that could have itself arisen within a social group, occurring as a form of collective realization. It is not something that would be voluntarily enunciated at a
social level since it is an experiential eminence created in individual consciousness out of an intimate acquaintanceship with a specific inhabited environment encountered daily over the course of time. The guideline confirms that while individuals are socially constituted in what they say or do about the past, it is still primarily society and ‘I’ as individual members of social groups who assume the act of commemorating specific historical events or past episodes in their lives. This perpetually becomes distinct, and at times, starkly so, when an individual memory of an event or what someone said clashes with another person's memory of it. The subsequent conflict is between one's memory and that of the others. Memories are then not shared but contested. All of us have associates and connections in memorizing, when the memories of others vitally corroborate our own, but the times when individual memories and the memories of others do not validate each other, when what happened and with what consequences are remembered in different ways and ardently deliberated, make obvious that memory is always individually shaped and socially established at one and the same time.

In the age of media and technology, may be particularly during the last decade of increasing digitization, this generates a flow of, and production of, second-hand memories as explained by Young. Particular narratives and images are reproduced and reframed, yet also questioned and contested through new images and so forth. Collective memory today differs much from the collective memories of an oral culture, where no printing technique or transportation contributed to the production of ‘imagined communities’ where we come to share a sense of heritage and commonality with many human beings we have never met - as in the manner a citizen may feel a sort of kinship with people of his nation, region or city.

Opposing the idea of collective memory, Young has introduced the notion of “Collected Memory”, marking memory's inherently fragmented, collected and individual character, while Jan Assmann developed the notion of “Communicative Memory”, a variety of collective memory based on everyday communication. This form of memory, communicative memory, is similar to the exchanges in an oral culture or the memories collected and made collective through oral history. In *The Texture of Memory*, Young considers that as the years pass and the number of
survivors dwindles, memorials take on an added burden of signification under radically different circumstances, nations, and generations situated spatially and temporally far from past events, under diverse political systems and cultural conditions. Young also dismisses the notion of collective memory as an abstraction, a metaphysical ghost that is bandied about uncritically. Different ethnic groups, nations, religions, generations, tend to remember the same past in complex and conflicting ways. And if memory is such a labile, fleeting construct, fraught with so many difficulties, then erecting monuments to memorialize past events poses almost insurmountable problems.

Nevertheless, memorials become a tool through which the public understands the past, and eventually shapes, rather re-shapes, the future. The term ‘memory’ remains quintessentially useful in articulating the connections among the cultural, the social, and the political representations of the past. Representational forms such as literary and cinematic frames of memory often represent a collage of contending memories and proffer the possibility of prosthetic memory of past. The images of the past and the recollected knowledge are sustained and conveyed by the performance. Hence remembering is an inherently generative process. It is selective, performative, and mediated by cultural and ritual performances, as well as by the written and spoken words. Memorials are those emotional spaces that embody emotions and are designed to evoke emotions and feelings in the viewers and participants. Artistic representation is an integral part of cultural remembrance, yet each mode of art involves both a revision of the original event and a unique comment on the tradition of remembrance itself. Furthermore, different modes of art influence our understanding of past in different ways. In the act of representing trauma, memory is the common denominator as it turns out as a social technology that can connect representation and social expression. Subsequently, it becomes contested to study the myriad ways in which the cultural texts and products foster the power to change the structure of memory. The social process of establishing artifacts represents the collective consciousness and collective memory, and it has been discussed by various authors and critics who generally opine that past events are largely formulated to give significance and relevance to the present. While memorial refers to an object which serves as a focal point for the act of remembering; memorialization refers more significantly to the act of remembering itself. Through spectacular monuments, public
understand and speak the past events and eventually, those events get transformed, re-created, and re-structured in the collective consciousness of the individuals.

Memorials are commonly artistic works and can have many forms. In representing trauma and loss, solace and survival, representational memorials explicitly impact and affect the process of remembrance. Moreover, representational memorials contend to evoke and construct event-oriented memories. Artistic memorial forms, in this sense, are as much the products of the symbols and narratives available publicly and of the social means for storing and transmitting them, as they are the possession of individuals. Olick observes that though Halbwachs distinguishes socially framed individual memories from collective commemorative representations and mnemonic traces, yet collective memory can be used to refer to aggregated individual recollections, to the official commemoration, to collective representation, and disembodied constitutive features of shared identities (Collective Memory 336).

Generally, the shape of contemporary media in society gives rise to the assumption that cultural memory is dependent on media technologies and the circulation of media products. The distribution of artifacts creates the possibility of articulating past differently at different sites. In literature as in films, there are different modes of representation which may elicit various modes of cultural remembrance in the audience. The idea of cultural memory is communication and media in the form of shared versions of the past that are invariably generated by means of “medial externalization”. Representations in the form of literature, film, and internet can be considered as more sophisticated media technologies which broaden the temporal and spatial range of remembrance. Each of these media has its specific way of remembering and leaves its trace on the memory it creates. Fictional media, such as novels and films are characterized by their power to shape the collective imagination of the past in a way that is truly fascinating. Representation, both novelistic and cinematic, possesses the potential to generate and mould images of the past which would be retained by the entire generation.

The demonstration of a tormenting past is imperative not just for the sake of individual needs, but more importantly for the possibility of “counter hegemonic” resistance and negotiation of the dominant discourse of memory. This sensuous engagement with the past could be achieved through the experience offered by the mass-mediated representation. The experiences through representational forms signify
“a substitute, a removable attachment and an addendum” (Landsberg Prosthetic Memory 91). Sometimes these new memories replace older memories, at other times they supplement to previous memories and most often they are extensions to earlier memories. Mediated experience of past events proffers limitless and multi-layered possibilities in altering individuals’ memory. Nevertheless, it helps to re-imagine and re-invent the remembered past images and incidents. Apparently, by engaging in this mimetic experience, the visual art and literature make empathy possible through what Alison Landsberg identifies as the “transferential space”. Sigmund Freud describes transference as “a piece of real experience, but primarily one which has been made possible especially by favourable conditions and… is of a provisional nature” (quoted in Landsberg 135).

As Fentress and Wickham have noted, “the moment we think our memories”, recalling them and articulating them, they are no longer objects; they become part of us. At that moment we find ourselves indissolubly in their centre. It has been demonstrated that it is the action of the imagination which allows us to assimilate our experience into our narrative identities. But we do not only think our own memories they are a by product of circumstantial or eventful occurrences. Through the reception of texts/works representing the past experience of others, we think the memories of others and in doing so place ourselves in some relation to their pasts. This is not a passive absorption of meaning. We do not simply adopt the memories of others as would seem to be implied by Landsberg in the apparently straightforward way in which prosthetic memories become parts of one’s personal archive of experience. Their meaning has to be constantly revised and renegotiated in relation to our existing and ongoing understandings of the past and the narrative identities contingent upon them. Popular memory involves developing a connection between our own pasts and that of others, rather than the folding in of the past of the other into our own memory. This is crucial, as it is the discursive space between “our” pasts and “theirs” that allows the opportunity for historical critique, and action in the present based upon it.

Thus, the vision of the past and the history can be drawn from diverse sources which becomes a “transferential space”; space where readers and spectators can experience the events which they did not live through. They may not experience a meticulous repetition of the original event yet it fosters a profound insight into the event which is probably inaccessible. While recreating the past through mediated
representation, readers and spectators then experience a memory that no one else ever had. The act of taking on these prosthetic memories changes their own subjectivities. With the indulgence of imagination, these mediated representations function as prosthesis between an individual and a historical narrative about the past. This implies the personal characteristic of prosthetic memory inflected by the reader’s other experiences in the world, which is different from the collective memory. Collective and cultural memory can preserve the memory of lived experience but an individual can attain the experience in one’s own way. Sometimes, the provocative images of popular culture become so entangled with lived experience that it becomes quite difficult to make a distinction between lived experience and assimilated memory.

Most of the representations of the past events are always contested by the current conditions, from which it derives. Re-presentation, rather than representation, holds up the mirror in a light which enables us to see the reality which is both reflected and refracted. Re-presentations of violent events allow us to “take on” other people's and groups’ experiences and memories. Offering an extended mediation on representation, cultural theorist Stuart Hall describes representation as an act of representing a meaning that already exists. It is the way in which meaning is imparted to depict images and words. Moving beyond the accuracy or inaccuracy of specific representations, Hall argues that the process of representation itself constitutes the world it aims to represent. This process explores the ways in which the shared language of a culture, and its signs and images, provide a conceptual roadmap that bestows meaning to the world rather than merely reflecting it. Hall's concern throughout is the centrality of culture in shaping our collective perceptions and how the dynamics of various representations reproduce forms of symbolic power. While explaining the notion of representation, Jenn Webb writes:

A contested issue in representation is that of substitution, the process of standing in for someone or something, or acting as a substitute for the ‘real thing’. They even resemble its representation; the representation resembles the event; they are not identical with each other but they exist for us hand in hand. The representation allows us to make sense of what is going on, but we can never really experience it in all its fullness because it belongs in the realm of reality, that which is always other to us, the subjects of representation (7).
Re-presentation can never be real or objective for it is constructed through images that need to be interrogated for their ideological content and implications. No fixed meaning exists until it is represented. Our interpretation of an idea, a group, or an event is constituted through information that we receive through various different avenues, such as images and the media, in addition to the social and cultural inputs. How we give meaning to these interpretations is being communicated within a culture through a shared set of ideologies. On one hand, we encounter a concrete reality which cannot be contained in any system of representation; while on the other hand, we witness ‘representation’ itself of that which is not real and yet is much more ‘real’ to us. Baudrillard pointedly describes the absence of any ‘natural’ connection between the “referent” and the “representation” as no sign connected directly with any real thing or any real event so far, rather with ‘the precession of the simulacrum’, the representation of reality and event which re-creates and reproduces the world for us. “Reality itself does not exist, or rather, does not exist for us outside the domain of representation, ‘for reality is a principle, and it is this principle that is lost” (Webb 28).

Situated within the tradition of memory theory, the discussion of representation and memorialization aims also to delineate a definition of a “Collected Cultural Memory” of Post-1984 Punjab. The term emerges from the insufficiencies of the phrases such as cultural memory and collective memory; the memories of the violence do not always coincide with the predominant thoughts of society. Memory is not something that can always be completely fabricated by the leading powers. Familial factors and memory of specific groups such as eye-witnesses of the particular historical events cannot be completely erased or re-written by the current political powers. The combination of collective and cultural memory results in a “Collected Cultural Memory”. Maria Sturken described that cultural memory emerges outside the historical discourse and is situated among culturally mediated negotiations. Consequently, it refers to a culturally mediated collection of multifaceted and multi-layered memories. It often represents a collection of contending memories and extends the possibility of extended memory. The term “Collected Cultural Memory” stands to the sense of the past in the present, both in the mind of an individual and in the collective consciousness of a social group.
The concept of “Collected Cultural Memory” has been integrated into the present thesis in order to juncture and transcends various concepts posited by specific critics and philosophers. The insightful ideas, such as Assmann’s notion of “Cultural Memory” (2003), Alison Landsberg’s concept of “Prosthetic Memory” (2004), James Young’s Collected Memory and J.K. Olick’s critical insights on collective memory (2003) have helped to understand the significance of various memorial forms. Media studies’ approach to memory is perhaps better suited to question how literature and film represent traumatic pasts and to what degree these pasts are always already mediated memories. Moreover, the research has made a further use of the “instrumentalist approach to the collective memory” which emphasizes not what memory does, but rather what can be done with memory, and also memory as a useful tool of politics (Olick From Collective 250). Nevertheless, it is important to also be critical of these memories, since they can alter over time. This is important for my argument that a representational memorial not only formulates collective cultural memory of a particular group or community, but it also challenges official memory/records and evokes multiple counter memories.

James Young, in his Texture of Memory, makes use of the term collected memory rather than collective memory. Suggesting collective memory as cohesion, Young studies collected memory in terms of the contentious nature of cultural memory. Young prefers to use the term ‘collected memory’ instead of ‘collective memory’, because “societies cannot remember in any other way than through their constituents’ memories”. Therefore, in the process of bearing testimony to the disturbing memories the most important thing is neither truth nor historical accuracy but the testimony itself.

Marianne Hirsch’s “Postmemory” and Alison Landsberg’s “Prosthetic memory” represent less sociologically constrained theories of artificial memory in which representations in effect precede reality. Landsberg has advanced the idea of “prosthetic memory” in relation to contemporary popular culture and film, while “postmemory” has been theorized by Hirsch in the narrower context of the Holocaust and the survivor’s family photographs. Each theory offers its own approach to the phenomenon of appropriated memory in a postmodern culture of irreducible mediated
experience; a montage of memories in the age of technical reproducibility. Each implies comparable questions of authenticity, identity, and the precedence of representations over reality. Hirsch’s theory, especially in its idea of “appropriation by others” - specifically, non-survivors, non-Jews etc. continues to raise significant ethical, epistemological, and aesthetic questions, like, who owns a specific memory, or memory in general? What is the difference between first and second-hand memories? What do these conceptions of artificial memory tell us about transformations in subjectivity or individual human identity, and how these changes are mediated by technologies of representation? (Kilbourn 27).

Landsberg’s notion of “Prosthetic Memory” is predicated on the assumption that, long before television or web-based formats, preceded, of course, by photography, a mass medium like cinema already constituted a form of memory as both storage place and retrieval mechanism, existing independently of the body and in a complex relation to the mind. Cinema, in this view, is an example of both a form of collective memory and a medium from which the viewer may glean information about the past - however banal or trite or inaccurate (Prosthetic Memory 27). Troubling for some, Landsberg is concerned less with questions of historical accuracy or the recuperation of an authentic past and more with the ethically empowering potential for the individual of such an expanded mnemonic dimension: “The cinema and the technologized mass culture that it helped inaugurate transformed memory by making possible an unprecedented circulation of images and narratives about the past” (29).

The choice of various cultural artifacts and the tools of commemoration which aim to validate the traumatic memories of those times do not solely affect the Sikh memory and the Punjabi collective consciousness but find a new transnational context in the contemporary times. Representational memorials reveal that traumatic memories do not solely belong to those of a singular generation or a group who witnessed the violence directly as collective trauma. Prosthetic memory and collective consciousness broaden the possibility of remembrance. Despite the facades of permanence, commemorations are sites of creative remembering and strategic forgetting. They are deeply contested and the painful past and traumatic memories compel writers and artists to draw a fine line between remembering their personal sacrifices without celebrating
violence. While some texts remember and revoke for the purpose of reconciliation, others intend to provoke and perpetuate the dead past, history, and events.

Their focus has particularly been on the visual nature of violence and the impact of these visual images on collective memory. They argue that in modern times, images have become our primary means of recollecting the past. Consequently, the study of images has become central to the study of cultural memory. These images then are definitely not flashbacks; they are there in order to disrupt the visual nature of memory in favor of a more mediated and highly symbolic textual mode of remembering and commemoration. In the same manner, a writer conveys his experiences through fragmented and shifting narrative points of view. This deliberate withholding of meaning is illustrative of the kind of suspension that is central to this approach.

The present thesis has studied the contextual relationship between memory and its representation found in cultural artifacts. Moreover, art and literature, as frozen memorial moments, reveal the paradoxically time-bound and timeless nature of cultural memory. In addition to this, museums, films, novels, and images have the potential to influence cultural memory, thereby impacting cultural, psychological, and political attitudes towards a particular historical event. The focus on 1984 and post-1984 in Punjab established that a collected cultural memory is a culturally-mediated gathering of contradictory memories of state-nation conflicts. Consequently, these modes of memory and forms of commemoration over thirty years after Operation Bluestar have become the focus of exploration. What was once a private memory for a community is now a public discourse in intergenerational and transnational memory? A progressive approach has been adapted in revealing the formation and retention of memories that are really a “generative force; a force which propels us not backward but forwards” (Landsberg Prosthetic Memory 191).

Texts addressed in the following chapters include a range of genres from museum to textbooks and from cinematic to fictional narratives. The endeavor is to study collective and cultural trauma that is rooted in the post-1984 events of public and collective memories. Moreover, the choice of selected narratives and cultural products aim to demonstrate the sparks of violence that have influenced the memory
and imagination of Sikhs and non-Sikhs as well. The selected texts illustrate the distinction between authentic and prosthetic memory. Documented texts, literary, and cinematic representation of Punjab 1984 display and influence various means of remembering and memorializing, and simultaneously expose the haunting nature of traumatic memories and remembrance, thus, by default influencing an individual’s subjectivity and political consciousness. Literature has been seen as forms of individual expression in which memory can be individual and can simultaneously also belong to a culture, a nation and other kinds of group identities. Astrid Erll, in Memory in Culture, provides three different modules which help to analyze the media representation of literature and cinema. He classifies the phenomenon within, between and around the media which has the power to produce and shape cultural memory.

Fragmented memories and divided recollection of the past are at the root of re-scripting the aftermath of Operation Blue Star for reviving it in contemporary times. The supplanting of reality supplements a kind of realism to these representations that allow it to be remembered. This condition of fragmented remembrance can be described as a condition in which the individual experiences certain thing/events/emotions of which there is a certain memory, but because of the conflicting nature of the recent experiences and its contextual nature, the person sticks to an earlier, more benign image of the ‘I’.

Besides archiving the past experiences, memory also permits the construction of a coherent life narrative, and a film or a book has the potential to arouse an emotional or visceral response. Secondly, a virtual image not only creates multiple meanings but also connects present with the past as the viewer derives significances and relates the spectacle to his or her contemporary context. In favor of acts of creation and images of thought, a film has the potential to create its own fluid of temporalities and movements. Moreover, through the study of selected texts, we can ascertain how the memories of those who experience the events first-hand are transmitted to the next generation. Generation and memories are mutually constitutive not because of some objective features of social or cultural structure but because of experiential commonalities and resulting similarities in individual memories of historical events. The Sikh diaspora also consists of that generation which has never witnessed those times yet they make and unmake provocative slogans against the
Indian state in order to address the atrocities they vicariously underwent during the 1984 turmoil. An individual is aware that the term memory could sound provocative since children do not remember the actual experiences of their parents and therefore they get connected with the past through secondary experiences. Through collected cultural memory, individuals might develop a meaningful and significant relationship to a particular memorial culture of which they have no lived experiences. Thus, collected cultural memory allows groups to develop a sense of sameness over time and space through either selective remembering or obliviousness.

Traumatic memories of Operation Bluestar and the logic of individual and cultural trauma and other aesthetic forms have often been represented by the memory and collective consciousness of Punjabis in general and Sikhs in particular. The social functions of literature and films are some of the central questions which memory studies have to deal with, in this area of research. To study the post-1984 voices, this thesis has included a strand of memorialization through its re-presentations in various verbal and visual media as well as through museological mode. The subsequent chapters enumerate the theoretical framework sketched out in the introduction and the theoretical work on memory studies. Despite the continuing disturbance and trauma, memory can become a creative resource and gradually one can turn from the passionate emotion aroused by individual memory to the gravitas evoked by collective mourning.

Moreover, painful pasts and their influence on collective remembering are not confined to those who have directly experienced them. In The Mnemonic Imagination, Keightley and Pickering introduced the concept of ‘mnemonic imagination’ in order to show the alliance between personal life and public culture which puts forth a new dimension while representing trauma:

Imagining the painful pasts of others is the precondition for empathy, and empathy is itself the precondition for sharing such pasts, but even before mnemonic imagining of this kind can occur, any traumatic experience has to have been worked through, for without this there can be no emphatic engagement, whether of the mnemonic imagination or the historical imagination. It is only a painful experience which can be co-performed discursively, and this is always dependent on the intersubjective relations of those involved (172).
Generally, a numbingly traumatic event does not register at the time of its occurrence, but only after a temporal gap or a period of latency, at which time it is immediately repressed, split off, disavowed (Lacapra 174). Even in the context of Operation Bluestar, it took more than two decades to address the problems of Punjab in 1984 and what happened during the period of insurgency and counter-insurgency in the region. Cathy Caruth rightly contends in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* that the impact of a traumatic event lies in its ‘belatedness’. The violence of 1984 is not forgotten, and the search for justice and truth stimulates the memories of violence and trauma. It continues to haunt the collective consciousness of a community; ‘Punjabi collective consciousness’ of 1984, which remains ardently contested. Witnessing is a lived experience; it is an awareness of receiving another’s testimony, and the impact of that experience remains as a part of one’s historical knowledge. For those who did not live in India during 1984, literary accounts and media remain the only ways to form opinions about this period’s historical facts.

Whereas visual media have multiplied and extended our means of recording and thereby remembering events, trauma increasingly serves as a model for deep memory in a mass-mediated culture. Following this proposition, it is important to keep in mind that any media representation of an event always results from the inherent limits of objectivity. This has a simple reason, for “the original experiences of memory are irretrievable; we can only ‘know’ them through memory remains – images, objects, texts, stories” (Sturken 9). This is not to say that the memorialization efforts and representation post-1984 are imaginary accounts but that the memories that have sustained and survived from the tragedy may not be accurate depictions of the event. Laub believes, what ultimately matters … are the experience of itself living through the testimony of giving testimony (85). Consequently, when the individuals fail to express their memories personally, then the representations that intend to display their emotions are easily accepted and flourish in being recognized as their very own. These representations evoke the reality of memory and violence, strengthening the idea that particular events actually happened. It invites its audience to feel a part of that reality through graphic depictions that substitute for the reality of actual occurrences.
The common challenges of the post-1984 period include the conditioning of the collective memory and the contested politics of memorializing that has been shaping the memory continuously since the first-ever commemoration endeavor. The turbulent year of 1984 has always been portrayed and presented differently by different modes of art. The literature in Hindi, English and other languages has begun to lead the way out of that impasse. In English, the events of 1984 have evoked more non-fiction as compared to fiction. Much is written on anti-Sikh riots as compared to the period of insurgency and counter-insurgency in Punjab. Historians, writers, and the public alike continue to debate who to blame for the loss of thousands of lives during the period of militancy. Historians and authors play a significant and socially confirmed role as ‘rememberers’. They do not see themselves as remembering lived experience but rather as witnessing to the experience of others through their testimony. The act is processed by yoking together words, symbols and to some extent, historical facts, which are the voluntary or involuntary testimonies of others and memory has more to do with the one who acts as a witness and when one remembers lived experiences, and how these two roles coalesce in one person.

Art and literature can vividly portray individual and collective memory together with their contents, workings, fragility, and distortions by coding them into aesthetic forms such as narrative structures, symbols, and metaphors. Different forms of art and media are the technologies of memory that directly contribute to examining the way subjectivity is assembled. As a “mimesis” of memory, literature stands for both and plays a distinctive role in the production of cultural memory. The possibilities and limits of literary representation are gauged when it comes to the memories of violent events or history. The texts described in the following chapters attempt to describe notions like Prosthetic Memory, Cultural Memory, Mnemonic Imagination, and Collected Memory. The work has probed deeper the concept of representation of memorial forms. The endeavor is to study how art and literature, or any other form of art, becomes an expression of an individual mind and how those representational forms get affected by various other significant elements. Almost every artistic work or the technique employed emerges from collective memory and personal experience; however, there exists an in-between space which affects a mode of art as well as the finished product of art. Metaphors of memory, the narrative representation of consciousness, the literary production of the mnemonic space and of
subjective time are some of the key issues in cultural studies and memory studies that explore engagement with memory. Memory, trauma, and representations are thus all closely related.

II

The present thesis studies the concepts of “Collected Memory” and “Collective Memory” based on post-1984 Punjab through the representations of traumatic pasts in select texts. The research explores the way historical events can be translated into different forms of representation and in what way it challenges the notion of collective memory as well as the possibility of representational memorialis that create a “counter-memory” and transfer not only individual narratives but collective memories into the public sphere. It foregrounds the way memories of 1984 Punjab have been recorded, documented and, in more general terms, re-presented the events of Punjab 1984, particularly the aftermath of Operation Bluestar. Using the concepts of “Collected Cultural Memory”, the thesis has analyzed the way narratives and iconic images of violence of 1984 Punjab have conceived the role in art and literature, and how the past events continue to be reshaped and reconstructed through various modes of art. For the purpose of the research, the study offers a comparison and contrast with mediated representation of traumatic events and collective memory. Every society has a distinctive way of representing their past and when the past is specifically traumatic the means of representation are often challenging. As classical historiography often focuses on the grand narrative of the political-diplomatic relations, it has a tendency to overlook the particular socio, cultural and personal accounts. The struggle over the representation of historical events could be seen as the struggle between the popular and the collective memories. Numerous scholars and writers like Khushwant Singh, Amitav Ghosh, Ranajit Guha, Hartosh Singh Bal have written extensively on this period and criticized the atrocities committed by state machinery during and after 1984 and have discussed the violence of 1984 and its effects on Sikh memory.

While the emphasis is given on memory and the acts memorialization, specific issues have been addressed in the thesis by positing four different representations of the 1984 Punjab through Amandeep Sandhu’s Roll of Honour, Gulzar’s Maachis, The
Nation’s Tortured Body: Violence Representation, and the Formation of a Sikh Diaspora (2004), and the Central Sikh Museum that is situated in Golden temple, Amritsar. The iconic nature of traumatic experiences and the experience of memorizing the past events may get stored in the form of literal, indelible, and inflexible images but the real experiences/first-hand experiences definitely go beyond the idea of memorializing. That “experience of traumatic experience” is locked in what Pierre Jennet has called “traumatic memory”. These images do not haunt the survivors in the form of abractions-intrusive flashbacks that evoke or re-present the crisis moment in all its literality. Memories of a violent past can often obscure the fine line between reality and imagination actuating a sense of confusion and incomprehension. While considering the cultural and socio-historical expressions of trauma, the present work purports to interpret how past historical prints impinge on our memory by modifying, transforming and even reproducing it. It underlines a constant need to re-invent and revivify the Self, often necessitating the ritual of disremembering, per se, to exorcise the psychedelic delusions and the many absurdities of reality.

The first chapter titled “The Re-presentation of Traumatic Pasts: Amandeep Sandhu’s Roll of Honour” is based on the novel by Roll of Honour, which is a compelling story about the events of 1984 with the directness emanating from a searing personal experience and the devastation caused by split loyalties, the trauma of male rape, individual and collective humiliation in a military school for boys in Punjab in the wake of Operation Bluestar. It presents how a political action confuses an adolescent young boy. So when witnesses disrupt, one needs to reflect upon them and learn/unlearn from them. There is a mix-up of events retaining the essence of one’s experience as a witness to the massacre of Sikhs in 1984.

The novel is scrutinized with the help of insights gained from my reading of memory studies. This chapter has laid emphasis on analyzing the artistic techniques used by the writer in order to understand how fragmented memories in narratives are being re-membered, re-imagined and finally re-constructed through imagination. I will be discussing how the author has blended his personal trauma with the political situation in Punjab during 1980s. The chapter also introduces the year 1984 as a
historical and cultural trauma and offers a viewpoint on how this has affected perceptions of the past and the formation and distribution of that collective and cultural trauma. Sandhu chose the novel medium for Roll of Honour to ensure that an original and intermediate “co-mix of testimony and memoir” captures the essence of his narrative perfectly. Trauma and its articulation in Roll of Honour follow the tortuous trajectory of individual lives to a point where personal tragedy is encompassed into a broader social realm and hence presented as such.

The second chapter “Subjective Camera, Celluloid Re-presentation, and Memories of 1984: A Critique of Maachis” presents a detailed comprehension of how a film works as a distributor of trauma. Through its popularity, visual stimulation, and often one-sided storytelling frameworks, films have a direct impact upon the Indian psyche. A film allows viewers to witness situations, if not the actual events. In this case, the film Maachis presents an insightful depiction of the events that followed 1984 as they happened even though they are second-hand narratives. Certain films on the subject also pre-determined the form and the content of representations of militancy during the 1980s. In a way, Maachis also does the same. Finally, the chapter discusses the film’s impact on the social perception of 1984 in the collective memory of the Sikh psyche. But Maachis caused a rupture in how Indians perceived the past and historical origins of the violence of 1984. In this chapter, I have interrogated the salient aspects of screen memory, including the celluloid depiction of the traumatic remembrance. Maachis portrays the similar atrocities of the time but has provided a deep insight into the history and situation of Punjab during those turbulent times.

Cinematic representation, the most operative mode of shaping the collective imagination and understanding of past events, requires focused and analytical study in order to understand the relationship between image, history, and memory. Cinema, one of the powerful tools, which gives voice to repressed memories, works as a tool which exercises the act of memorialization through which generations can look back. Critics and scholars have been aware of its efficacy, which has also led to direct and indirect attempts at political control. While comprehending the role of cinema in shaping historical accounts, the receiving end may allow exploring the broader mechanisms of steering public consciousness not only about history but also about
narratives constructed about history. Maurin Turim authoritatively demonstrates that flashbacks are central to the production and comprehension of screen memory. Her formulations would work as a touchstone for further speculation. The entire discussion of cinematic representation can be summed up in these two words: time and space. The concept of time-image is based on the notion that an image has the potential to show the whole idea of a narrative. This cinematic aspect of time can be read the way a director makes use of cinematic techniques to throw light on a particular event and also in the manner in which he uses them to show atrocities through the lens of history and past.

Even in Maachis, through Subjective Memory, the spectator not only visits the life of characters but also confronts the stark reality and nuances of Sikh militancy. Maurin Turim introduces Subjective Memory explaining how this term carries the double sense of the rendering of history as a subjective experience of a character in fiction and the formation of the subject in history as the viewer of the film identifies with functional characters positioned in a fictive social reality. The film-image as a mobile assemblage, sometimes a frame, sometimes a shot, a sound, or the film as a whole, lends itself to this reading. Eventually, both the original image and the contemporary image become distorted in a historical mirage and directly alter the public opinion and collective memory.

The third chapter, titled “The Sikh Diaspora and Trauma of 1984: Brian Keith Axel’s Nation’s Tortured Body: Violence, Representation and the Formulation of a Sikh “Diaspora” (2001) describes the torture of Sikhs by the Indian police between 1984 and 1996. It discusses the images of tortured Sikh bodies that have been circulating on the Internet since 1996. Consequently, the narrative returns to questions of the ‘homeland’. Reflecting on the issues discussed, The Nation's Tortured Body might signify an ongoing fight for Khalistan. The book assists in analyzing the production and circulation of images of Sikhs around the world, beginning with visual representations of Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last Sikh ruler of Punjab, who died in 1893. The book argues that the imagery of male Sikh bodies has been situated in different times and in different ways with points of mediation among various populations of Sikhs around the world.
The storming of the Golden Temple complex in 1984 is a critical event which is central to the imagination of both a ‘Sikh nation’ and ‘Sikh diaspora’. Both narratives play upon the ‘politics of victimhood’; the representation of Sikhs as ‘victims’ of the two ghallugharas or ‘genocides’, which drove them into either physical or emotional ‘exile’ from India. They have sought to do so because they consider their nation, the Khalsa or Sikh Qaum, to be at war with the Indian state. Significantly, memory is the only legacy of the next generation and it becomes vital to consider the commonalities and collective trends in memory, the features of their communication and representation, and their ritualized performances, all of which in unison suggest that memory is a lot more than a naive expression of individual consciousness, as it is both ‘socially and culturally constructed’.

The third chapter which is a critical analysis of Nation’s Tortured Body: Violence, Representation and the Formulation of a Sikh “Diaspora” (2001), has been divided into two segments: first, the narratives and anecdotes about the formation of Sikh diaspora after 1984; second, the analysis has been made to reflect on how a community/group/individuals and sense of “Place”/ “Site” construct and recollect narratives about the trauma of personal and collective memories. The narratives that have been encoded in the book present a tale of the Sikh diaspora and the way they have written about and experienced the state-sponsored terror, martyrdom and the formation of their experience have been put forth through communication media in the age of information.

In the context of the Sikh nationalist discourse, Jenny Edkins calling it as a “struggle over memory” and considers that “some forms of remembering can be seen as ways of forgetting; ways of recovering from the trauma by putting its lessons to one side, refusing to acknowledge that anything has changed, restoring the pretense” (16). Like the partition of 1947, the historic tragedy of Operation Blue Star is a significant event where the ‘victims’ themselves, in this case, the victimized community of Sikhs in India, “choose to forget” and to the contrary, the Sikhs in the diaspora choose to ‘remember’ the events of 1984 by the acts of memorializing it. At the same time as, for the former, “forgetting is a strategy” used to cope with the trauma of being victimized by their own State/Nation in their own homeland, for the
latter, remembering is the formation of a community, a way of asserting their own identity as Sikhs. For Edkins, the memorialization of violence is a practice that reproduces stories of national glory and heroism, producing a linear time, the time of the state. Memorials of war, even of defeat, can inscribe the national myth or imagined community (17). A large part of the Sikh diaspora, who have never witnessed 1984, has chosen to memorialize it through practices and rituals. Subsequently, they re-engrave the collective trauma into a nationalist narrative that intrudes the normalizing narrative of the Indian nation-state. “They have sought to do so because they consider their nation, the Khalsa or Sikh qaum, to be at war with the Indian state” (Edkins 18). Thus, the narrative of 1984 intends to legitimize the creation of an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, by highlighting the repressive state policies of ‘torture and genocide’ employed by the Indian state in Punjab. The graphic images of Sikh martyrs, tortured bodies, and a demolished Akal Takht on the Internet have become increasingly mediated through digital space in an attempt to unite Sikhs in diasporic spaces particularly in London, Vancouver, and Singapore and infuse a sense of Sikh ‘nationhood’ in the diaspora (Shani Sikh Nationalism 96). In the same manner, Axel opines that images of men valorized as martyrs (shahid) circulate widely on the Internet along with historical narratives of the Sikh qaum. These images and narratives “interarticulate” with those that have circulated through other means, such as books, pamphlets, and audio-cassettes of Bhindranwale’s speeches, and form a central part of an emergent archive of Sikh struggles.

*Nation’s Tortured Body* is divided into five chapters, but the main issues can be classified into three parts, perhaps the different narratives of the Sikh diaspora may provide sufficient detail of its intricacies to get an idea of the relevant issues. Sikh memory, Sikh body, and the Sikh “Sites” are three different political regimes but these regimes became connected in the aftermath of 1984 and through the violent decades of the militancy period via the circulation of political ideologies, violent deaths, financial supports a sense of disaffection and the migration of men. The book is a historical as well as an anthropological enquiry of the violence between 1849 and 1998 in the emergence of a transnational fight for Khalistan. It has been the diaspora,
or histories of displacement that have created particular kind places, homeland, and commemorations.

In contrast to the nation, the transnational represents a new category of “imagined community”, one defined not even in terms of virtual parameters but in terms precisely of the productive absence of specific spatiotemporal limits. To put it yet another way: “diasporic identity” is to space what prosthetic or “postmemory” is to time: their intersection is crystallized in a text like Nation’s Tortured Body, presupposing two distinct subjectivities: The first is a kind of ‘transnational subject’; the second a specific product of diaspora. The question here is the relation between these two subjectivities, caught as they are in a specifically inflected version of the classic relation of identificatory intimacy and voyeuristic distance - an ontological gap that can be bridged only by means of film/narrative style, intimately connected to narrative focalization. Performance constitutes what is strategically lost in the doing of apast in re-enactments that are unstable, incomplete and often fragmented across different sites. Specifically, a large part of the Sikh diaspora has chosen to memorialize an event they never witnessed and they tend to re-inscribe it into a nationalist narrative that interrupts the homogenizing narrative of the Indian nation-state. Subsequently, the memory of 1984 both limits and frees the articulation of a post-nationalist Sikh discourse. Memory and territory are intrinsic to the construction of nationalist and diaspora narratives, yet the movement of memory cannot be clearly situated in time and space.

The Sikh diaspora has chosen social media and websites to contour the memories of 1984, there are multiple websites and blogs which are based on 1984 and Khalistan movement. In the aftermath of 1984, there were Sikh militants who wanted to get on with their lives and continue to practice their ‘faith’ in ‘secular’ India. Sikhs in the diaspora, many not even born in 1984, were, however, more willing to speak about an event which they had only experienced or ‘witnessed’ through the media. Consequently, Axel maintains that the ‘pure’ image of the male amritdhari Sikh has become twinned with the image of the tortured body in a new diasporic politics. Circulating globally by means of the Internet, disparate images of the gendered Sikh
bodies have thus been brought together with discourses about a homeland, Khalistan, which, itself, has never existed as an empirical delimitation (10).

Although Axel is correct to draw attention to the symbolism of the tortured body of a male Amritdhari Sikh. The body here does not operate in a vacuum but derives its emotive power from the graphic representations of the Golden Temple reduced to rubble. Furthermore, the existence of the concept of ghallughara in the Sikh tradition and its translation as “holocaust” or “genocide” allows Sikh nationalists to both construct a discourse of “victimhood” and legitimize the ‘imagined community’ of the nation internationally. The memorial sites help to reconstruct rather than create memories of those same events. After three decades, a whole new generation has grown up after the Operation and many from this new generation have become parents. They hear and read about the Operation and are trying to understand the meaning of it to reconnect to the history of the last generation. Many of them are devising new tools and mediums to relate to that history. Simultaneously, the study intends to decipher an intergenerational cohort of Sikhs in the diaspora (in USA and Canada) who are trying to piece together the fragments of the painful pasts ‘to give a cultural meaning and shape to broken traumatic experiences’. Through their work, they are puncturing and perhaps demolishing, the state-directed narratives of Operation Bluestar. In certain places, literary memories of 1984 as violence are invaluable to convey the human experience of this moment. Thus, the present work is grounded in memory studies but is perhaps better described as an interdisciplinary engagement with the memory of 1984-as violence. The wounds may never heal but by connecting one pain to the pain of others, the meaning and experiencing of pain stands transformed.

As Operation Bluestar is foremost a historical moment, this work relies on scholarship within the Sikh studies, particularly on Sikh diaspora and historical books and documents. Museology itself has been an energetic tool to register the suggestive images that can provoke historical events just as they can influence memory. Again, this structural mode affects those who did not directly witness historical events but became parts to instances of Postmemory in one way or another. These connections are important to comprehend and pronounce interactions between history and personal
anecdotes, and the individual and collective processes and mechanisms of remembrance. The core issues that question the relationship between images and history have established theoretical aspects of the image both as “a medium of history” and “a figure of remembrance”. Nevertheless, it becomes a reliable mean of historical narration and the substance of remembrance in the process of procuring identity.

The fourth chapter, “Exhibiting and Archiving Trauma of 1984: The Central Sikh Museum”, has focused on the study of the portraits of Sikh martyrs and the names inscribed upon the Central Sikh Museum’s wall evoke a specific memory and remembrance while the painting of demolished Golden Temple evokes a more generalized feeling of loss. The experience of visiting the Central Sikh Museum becomes a personal memory in itself for the viewer that mimics actual remembrance of 1984 violence. Each portrait is relatively more effective in evoking and creating a memory. As a whole, they create a complete process. Thus, even as the memorial’s capacity to evoke remembrance to reach genuine memory of the event fades, its elements will work together to re-create the memorialization process for new viewers which will succeed in keeping the collective memory of the event alive.

Taking the museum as a memory device, this chapter investigates how remembrance is produced through engagement with photographs and “sites”. The chapter has critically analyzed the “lieux de mémoire” at two different levels: First, “the Wall of Sikh Martyrs of 1984” in the Central Sikh Museum situated in Golden Temple, Amritsar against the following questions: how do memorials shape the narrative of violence, trauma, and heritage and how do they interact with the ongoing transitional justice and peace process? Secondly, the present chapter has analyzed the significance of a memorial site and the representation of trauma as a ‘transferential experience’. Using ‘The Wall of Martyrs of 1984’, as an empirical lens to frame the main analysis, the purpose of this chapter is two fold: These aspects have been deciphered through lieux de memoire and the process of remembering, dis-remembering and mnemocide. Against the backdrop of several theoretical concepts such as “lieux de mémoire” (Nora), Collective Memory (Halbwachs) and Prosthetic Memory, which questions of re-presentation of truth and reality (Landsberg), in
chapter I have tried to answer these questions by examining the diverse elements of remembrance and their role within the memorial culture. In this way, I have attempted to study and observe how the memorial “site” and images impact the collective and the societal image of the year 1984? This chapter has tried to make an examination of “memory space”, a term that refers specifically to collectively sanctioned spaces that are intended to facilitate recollection and to trace a narrative of a nation’s past, in particular museums and memorials. It is equally important to investigate how memory may operate spatially in order to create such spaces, to understand the effectiveness of the lens or looking glass that the built form becomes.

With the exception of The Central Sikh Museum, all representations of Operation Bluestar and its aftermath are created between 2000 and 2014. It establishes the idea that violence and its traumatic effects cannot be simply relegated to the forgotten past. Both experience and memory are viewed as personal and social, social and mediated, proximate and distant. Prosthetic memories have an experiential quality that shapes the individual’s subjectivity and political consciousness. They are neither natural nor the product of a lived experience but the result of an engagement with a mediated representation. They are commodities, which make their images and narratives available to people from different national, ethnic, racial, religious, and social backgrounds. Hence, their social meaning is continuously negotiated and constructed.

The Central Sikh Museum is an important location for the portrayal of the tortured victims of 1984 as well as the display of historical objects and portraits of the Sikh Gurus. The galleries and exhibition rooms of the Sikh Museum are one of the most interesting sets of spaces. The gallery of martyrs portrays them as defenders of maryada. The movement of visitors through the interlinked galleries creates a visual lineage of medieval to modern martyrs; from paintings of Vadda Ghallughara and Chota Ghallughara, then literally leading to the wall of 1984. The corridor walls are a memorial of a different order, inscribed with names of those whose bodies were discovered within the complex and could be identified, and even those who were not cremated by the army, and therefore went ‘missing’ in the wake of 1984. The list of names provides a space and occasion for a periodic commemoration that doubles as a
personal and collective mourning. This particular visual field foregrounds the narratives of violence and trauma and also forms the ordering landscape of significant sites and momentous events.

Undoubtedly, photography remains a significant medium of postmemory, clarifies the connection between familial and affiliate memories. It becomes the mechanism by which public archives and institutions have been able to both re-embody and re-individualize cultural and archival memory. It enables individuals to see and touch the chord of the past and also reanimating it by undoing the finality of the photographic take. In this sense, Gurudwara museums are an incredibly productive cultural form and the primary articulation point of the Sikh commemorative imperative. This is a point where many Sikhs have established a set of practices that remake the private scene of national torture into a transnational ‘spectacle of subjectification’ (Axel The Diasporic 150). Museological mode as the art of collective memory helps to see archives and their role in the process of memorialization, remembering, as well as dis-remembering and mnemocide. The chapter has made a distinction between painful experiences which remain in some way expressible and traumatic experiences which do not, because they remain as recalcitrant traces of the past that cannot be satisfactory, and thus they turn into conscious recollection. This is what Cathy Caruth calls trauma as “cries of representation”.

Overall, the continuity of any group of people requires a general consensus about pivotal defining moments in history. History had to be reconsidered so that the ’84 could be more easily integrated into the larger historical frameworks that defined the collective trauma. This could only be achieved by the distortion of memory since memory defines how people perceive the past. The purpose is not to be historically accurate but rather to integrate the experience of the violence in Punjab’s cultural history and heritage. The cultural relation between memory and narrative found in the Sikh Museums, the time-based medium of film as celluloid memorial and the novel as memorial moment reveal the time-bound and timeless nature of cultural memory. All these cultural artifacts have the potential to influence cultural memory, thereby impacting social, political attitudes towards past misfortunes of Punjab. The focus on
memories of Operation Bluestar establishes that a collected cultural memory - a culturally mediated gathering of contradictory memories of this period and its aftermath turned up between 2000 and 2014 in films, novels, literature, and museums. Representations can make the memories of individuals seem irrelevant because the general public often only knows what it has seen in the movies or on TV, and now the Internet. In this sense, reality has been replaced by representation. Scholars of memory have termed this form of experience, vicarious experience. Because the framework of museums lies in material objects as primary sources, historians recognize inherent issues, problematic in the ‘truth’ which they seek to unfold and find themselves forced to adapt their tactics while drawing information out; this has led to tremendous efforts to borrow from other disciplines.

Our conception of the past can be drawn from diverse sources like novels, historical narratives, photographs, literary and non-literary works, and cyber-space. Out of this kaleidoscopic mass of fragments, the public can make and remake patterns of memories which explain the origins of nature of the world in which we live. And doing this, we define the place that we occupy in this world. In this fast-paced age of digitalization, there is a constant need to revive our memories, our perception of the past and interpretation of multiple narratives that are associated to a monotonous truth. The repetitive presence of Ghallughara 1984 in media has left an imprint on our memory. Humans learn from their past experiences and human existence is closely related to memory because this powerful tool not only helps to reorganize our past lineage but helps it to survive. The representational narratives give us an interpretation of the past and connect us with the future. In the absence of the firsthand experience, the individual existence gets connected with the ocean of unlived experiences and truth through the lived experiences of experiencing ‘memory’. With advances in technology, one should analyze the changes that have entered into the arena of these modes of memory; the question of exclusion, manipulation, and editing of different mnemonic mediums in this digitalized world. But these considerations are beyond the scope of this thesis. To sum up, memories can play a role in the construction of future generation from the rumbles of the past, and narratives and images are the best devices to serve this purpose.
Studying the idea of the act of acquiring new memories, Landsberg’s doctrine talks in terms of the interaction that goes between an individual viewer and intermediated representations of the past which does not belong to an individual. Usually, historical narratives are not simply perceived passively and inactively since they enable the observer to take on a felt understanding of a past through which they did not live. Unlike a lived experience, these second-hand memories enable the viewer to shape and re-shape subjectivity and politics. On the basis of what they offer, “unexpected alliances across chasms of difference” can be constructed, allowing people to respond in kind to the experiences of others. While viewing digital technologies, Van Dijck considers that technology not only allowing us to engage more intensively in the practices and processes of remembering one’s own self and the groups to which they belong, but digital spaces are providing opportunities to concretize, intensify, and expand the notions of belonging. Yet what is missing from Landsberg’s account is a mechanism by which these new memories are taken up and integrated into the political perspectives or subjectivity of the individual rememberer. Without understanding how these transformative meanings can be deciphered, the implication is that they inhere in the text and are somehow imposed on individual viewers.

The primary focus of this thesis is on the relation between the social and the individuated dimension of memory. Widening the scope of collected cultural memory, the following chapters highlight the role of cultural artifacts in constructing the socio-collective memory of past experience in its communicative interaction with the ever-transformative time and space.

In this respect, the duality of memory and remembering apparently entails critical attention to decipher the distinction between individual and collective memory. The present study has tried to characterize the relations between collective and individual memory as involving social memory substances and the materialization of collective memory on the one hand, and individual memory matters and the individualization of collective memory objects on the other. Consequently, the focus shifts from memory and subjectivity to memory and social group or memory and nation. This dichotomous relation leads to the reification of collective memory as an
autonomous entity which is continuously challenged by personal modes of remembrances which are over and beyond the collective. This assumption should also be noted that a social collectivity possesses memory in an analogous manner to an individual. Though there is no clear distinction between individual remembering and the transmission of memory at a collective front, there are still distinctions which mark these respective forms of memories. As far as museum exhibitions or any other media of communication are concerned one cannot explicitly trace how ‘We’ or ‘I’ would remember the past lives in which memory is transmitted within a whole social formation because there are quite different dynamics involved. The concept of personal cultural memory makes a shift not only from the notion of collective memory as an unconnected body but also from the binary separation of everyday social memory and public memory transmitted via mass media or acts of national commemoration. Van Dijck positions objectivized memory products at the intersection of the individual and collective, so moving away from the conception of collective memory as a fixed repository of shared memories towards a view of it as a shifting variety of products and practices. Mnemonic practices are always simultaneously individual and social, while mnemonic products gain their reality only by being used interpreted, and reproduced or changed. Inner way the present thesis suggests the way of conceiving of collective memory which incorporates both elements of lived experience and second-hand experience, which indicates how we might move between them. Media representations of the past are sites for the creative articulation of the relationship between individual experience and shared understandings of the past.

Social and cultural frames of remembering are not always transposed neatly into the realm of individual remembering; they may lead to the production of novel memory-texts and the creative interpretation and reinterpretation of public representations of the past in individual autobiographies and their different formations of readership. Through Self-produced and self-regulated media forms, such as webslogs we populate our shared memory with mediated forms of personal experience across time and space. The mnemonic imagination is clearly at work in their production, allowing an integration of personal experience with social frameworks of
remembering and cultural forms of expression. As Van Dijck notes, this process is fundamentally creative. The reinterpretation and re-presentation of experience using existing cultural codes and frames involves meaning being constructed and reconstructed, shared, and communicated in successive presents. Our past experience is imaginatively reworked into textual memory products using interpretative schemata and social frames particular associated with the different groups to which we belong during the life-course. In this ongoing process, we are not only continually achieving our narrative identity but also continue contributing to and drawing from the identities of those collectivities to which we are affiliated. In understanding the latter dimension of this process attention needs to be paid to the ways in which experiences as products circulate. This involves considering the action of the mnemonic imagination in the reception of these personal cultural mnemonic texts.

Likewise, the concept of “Mnemonic Imagination” provides a viable alternative to the concept of collective and cultural memory as it is a malleable and flexible mechanism by which the temporal meanings of the texts can be reconciled with the existing experiential memories of the viewer while new meanings of the memory are being created in the present. The notion provides a route by which experiences and the subject positions can be programmed in these, cultural texts, as it provides the capacity to recall and creatively synthesize the disparate elements of experience into a qualitatively new semantic whole such as a film or a book. It is also the means by which these semantic entities can be fused and understood by onlookers, readers or listeners in relation to their own past experience, and with reference to contemporary social and cultural frames of reference.

It is the imaginative quality of a response/experience to the past of the other that signals a move beyond simply listening to and recognizing an account of another's past experience, to instead develop some sense of what that experience may have been like at that time. This can govern the basis for our action in the present and future. It would, of course, be ingenuous to propose that every re-presentation about 1984, every image of terror, or every literary narrative of violence, immediately spurs us into action in the present. One can choose to ignore as well as respond to the ethical demands, made on us by the experience of others. The creative and
imaginative part of the artifacts might not be deployed to synthesize first and second hand experiences, or to provide us with an empathetic relationship with other people's pasts. While recognizing the potential of representations of second-hand experiences, mnemonic imagination gives way to reconstruct temporal relations between the self and other; and in this way allows a rehabilitation of mass media texts and images as resources for engaging with the past.

Imagination, is then, a precondition not only for individual memory but also for collective memory. It recognizes the possibility of an ethical response to them in which imagination is intermediate between self and other. Recognizing the importance of the interaction between imaginations in the process of remembering, it becomes promising to account for the relationship between individual and collective memory. Imagination synthesizes personal experience and produces self-identity, but it is also the means by which we interpret and assimilate the experiences of both proximate and distant others and move through time together. In attempting to explain the role of second-hand experience in remembering without succumbing to the tendency to reify collective memory as a property of groups, the present study has turned to communicative processes to explain the relationship between lived social practices of remembering and the public accounts of the past that transcend individuals and small groups. This involves a two-way dynamic of communication. Firstly, socially experienced pasts are mediated from within the groups, and networks in which they were experienced. Secondly, personal accounts are integrated into collective memories which promulgate the receivable memory for the individuals. This is visible through modes of culturally convened representations.

The employment of cultural conventions of representation, such as that of the wedding photograph or the family portraits, loosens these experiences from the specific social situations of their production, enabling them to circulate in textual form within and beyond social groups, populating a shared public memory. These processes are creative insofar as they involve an active synthesis of the first-hand experience with the second-hand knowledge of representational conventions, and in this way, these become articulations of the self-in-relation-to-others. This is a process by which the first-hand experience is turned into public second-hand experience. The
second dynamic is the institutional mediation of social experience. It is through this irreducibly public process that the pasts of ourselves and others are represented by others. In the construction of the novel or display, different pasts are communicated to us and enter into our historical understanding in various ways. For this reason, we agree that it is impossible to invoke 'the collective memory of an entire society'. Instead, popular memory is a process of remembering in common which involves the reciprocal action of both of these communicative dynamics.

Mnemonic imagination and collected cultural memory engross the indeterminate space. The space that lies between two different entities: first, the moment/ an event one experiences, sees and perceives, subsequently temporal meaning gets produced and thereafter, social or public memory. While explaining the relation between individual memory and cultural products, Keightley and Pickering call it a “complex process of cultural production and consumption” that includes the persistence of cultural traditions as well as the ingenuity of memory makers and the subversive interests of memory consumers” (173). So basically, the link between the pasts has to proceed as it is determined and imagined by the rememberer. Subsequently, the popular memory is a persistently contested entity as the rememberer is constantly governed by the contemporary time, space, and politics in the present. On the other hand, the structures of meanings inherent in the visual presentations and textual versions of the second-hand experience are always associated and tend to indulge in continual negotiations. It should be noted that mnemonic imagination not only deals with individual memory but also works in terms of social and collective memory, which supports any text/work to formulate past memories along with one's creative imagination as is displayed by the select texts.
Notes

i Derived from Sikh historical literature, its use is restricted to just two episodes, and even when it is applied to them, a distinction is made between the two. The first which occurred in 1746 is called Chhota Ghallughara [Small Holocaust] and the second in 1762 known as Vadda Ghallughara, [Great Holocaust]. The third Ghallughara as it came to be commonly known among the community occurred some 222 years later in 1984 when the Indian army invaded the Golden Temple. See Darshan Singh Tatla (2006)

ii Marianne Hirsch provides a concept of postmemory which describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before. It includes experiences that they “remember” only by means of stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up (Hirsch136).

iii According to Jefferey Alexander, cultural trauma occurs ‘when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, making their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways’ (2004,1).