CHAPTER-IV

Exhibiting and Archiving Trauma of 1984: The Central Sikh Museum

Politics of remembrance of a troublesome history whittle away at the exhibits of the Central Sikh Museum, the museum within the Golden Temple, Amritsar. Great deals of medieval art belonging to the Sikh Kingdoms were destroyed by the fire during Operation Bluestar and hence were not included in the museum later on. The representational photographs of 1984 document the violation of human rights carried on by the state and the tale of misguided youth from a relatively broader perspective. The photographs are the symbolic markers of the trauma to which the Sikh psyche or the “Collective Cultural Memory” often returns. To some extent these modes of memorializing succeed to represent the suffering and its consequences but fail to fully uncover the suffering itself.

While museums and memorials stabilize the past, the memory remains unsettled, politically fraught, and perpetually haunted by forgetting. The act of making memorials offers the false security that the past is less susceptible to the failures of memory (Huyssen Present Pasts 101). So, the way narratives of the past are constructed have real political and material consequences for nations and citizens, and their present and future. While there may be no pure narratives to recover from these sites, certainly some narratives are more harmful and divert farther from the truth than others. The point then is how to commemorate and create meaning out of what is both present and absent at memorial sites without resorting to violence or contention over how it is represented finally. One’s own presence at the memorials highlights the very impossibility of seeing or preserving everything not only because something has been deliberately effaced from memory or is markedly absent, but also since the past and what it means for the future is still being recreated through one’s presence.

Taking the museum as a memory device, this chapter investigates how remembrance is produced through engagement with objects, photographs, and artifacts. 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 is twofold: These aspects have been deciphered through “lieux de memoire” and the process of remembering, disremembering 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.

Photography, a significant medium of post-memory, becomes the mechanism by which public archives and institutions have been able both to re-embody and re-individualize cultural and archival memory. As the viewer revisits the past, it reanimates it and neutralizes the finality of the photographic image. While analyzing the photographs of Holocaust, Susan Sontag contends that “all memory is individual, unreproducible -it dies with each person”(On Photography 1). 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 suggest that memory is more than an expression of individual consciousness, and is both ‘socially and culturally constructed’. The discovery of divisive histories and the ability to
express what cannot be said are on uses that memorials must carry out as active co-shapers of society. They can help reach peaceful solutions, to some extent, to traumatic events from the past and foster an understanding of history that encompasses multiple layers by sharing collective knowledge. Scholarship has begun to reveal how remembering the past is an act of narration bringing new realities into being rather than simply reflecting an objective past (Kuhn 20). Each enactment remembering re-narrates the past in particular ways. This is not arbitrary but performs a particular social work in terms of maintaining collective identifications, particular shared narratives, as well as reinforcing particular erasures and extending/reproducing certain social violence. The politics of remembrance can also be studied as the politics of re-presentation and the ways in which the collective memories that do not correspond to the dominant historical narratives do not interact with the national narrative and how they are reflected in museum exhibitions. The politics of memorialization puts forth certain questions such as whose memories are sought, believed, and commemorated in the public sphere, what problems do traumatic events present for those attempting to commemorate and represent them? Are the narratives that define us accurately portray or manipulate the historical reality? How does a traumatic event relate to the individual and popular imagination? How does collective memory work and where does forgetting come into play?

Memorials play a vital role in transporting this assumed reconciling memory. This museological mode becomes a ‘transferential space’, space where viewers can experience events of which they did not live. They may not experience a meticulous repetition of the original event yet fosters a profound insight into the event which is probably inaccessible. Visitors then recreate memory that no one else ever had, the act of taking on these prosthetic memories changes their own subjectivities. This implies the personal characteristic of prosthetic memory inflected by a viewer’s other experience in the world, which is different from the collective memory. Alison Landsberg proposes the concept of prosthetic memory as something which is not natural and a kind of memory which is not the product of a lived experience. It is derived from engagement with a mediated representation like a film or visiting a museum. Prosthetic memory has the ability to produce empathy and social
Landsberg opines that “A sensuous engagement with the past is the foundation for more than individual subjectivity; it becomes the basis for mediated collective identification and the production of potentially counter-hegemonic public spheres” (*Prosthetic Memory* 21). The demonstration of the tormenting past is imperative not just for the sake of individual needs, but more importantly for the possibility of ‘counter-hegemonic’ resistance or negotiation of the dominant discourse of memory. This sensuous engagement with the past could be achieved through experience offered by a mass-mediated representation.

Moreover, the portrait of the demolished Golden temple evokes a different kind of memories and along with it very different emotions. The pictures patently show the confrontation between the Sikh militants and the Indian state. The army men standing in front of the demolished building of Akal Takhat shows a frowning eye of terror and horror, victory, and domination. The primacy of the dome and the devout in ritual remembrance, find a more subdued counterpart in the galleries and exhibits of the Central Sikh Museum of the *Darbar Sahib* (The Golden Temple), which began to be reconstructed in 1985 when militancy and state violence were at their height in Punjab. The tragedy remains in our memory through the diverse source available in the media. The photographic record produces haunting visual memories. These memories linger in our minds and act as an “indelible reference point” (Friedlander 13). They act as a vehicle of collective memory and ensure that the collective memory of the Operation Bluestar survives in the community’s spirit. Representing the pain, suffering, and helplessness of ordinary pilgrims and citizens, the pictures of mounds of corpses and disfigured victims leave the observer numb. Through these experiences, generally, indulge in a situation of being witnesses without ever having seen the total destruction that happened in the Golden temple. In trying to regain a *modicum of memory* people create a *lieux de memoire*, a site of memory. A *Lieux de memoire* functions as a frozen bit of time; a moment or event is removed from the context of present life and becomes a forced exercise in remembrance that is simultaneously self-referential and open to multiple interpretations. In English, these *lieux* are usually referred to as memorials, and the question arises: are memorials a manifestation of a history or an actual memory?
The Central Sikh museum has digital incarnations including the virtual museum websites such as Sikhchich.com and Centralsikhmuseum.com which display not only the names but also photos and various motifs belongings to the deceased. Depending on the image, the scale of the monument is lost along with texture and most importantly environment. It is an entirely different thing to read a list of names on that huge wall of Central Sikh Museum while coming out of the museum. On the other hand, digitization has also removed physical touch from other memorials. Neither physical nor digital memorials are independent or spontaneous. These digital memories are either governed by SGPC or by some Sikh organizations.

Photographs bearing witness, the concrete relations between memory and images, acts as a specific form of collected cultural memory that interprets an event as significant and deserving of critical questioning. Baudrillard’s module of virtual reality states that there is no event or atrocity in the absence of a virtual reality. Thus the idea of truth and reality is defined by these concrete and substantial modes of mnemonic devices. Barbie Zelizer raises some important questions on photographs taken during various historical disasters in her essay “Collective Memories, Images and The Atrocity of War” by whom and under which circumstances were these photographs taken? How were they received and to what effect? And most importantly, when, why how and to what purposes were they co-opted into the collective memory? In what ways have they persisted as vehicles of collective memory? (Remembering to Forget 1).

Moreover, critics like Nora and Lowenthal’s differentiation between history and memory acknowledge that the past can be static or it can be lived. A society remembers having individuals pass on information continuously, by living and existing, and even by changing. This is why the more persistent aspects of culture are not objects, but rather, ways of reality to other people and the world.

It is normally said that you have to be fixed in space and in time if you want to belong somewhere. The sites of memory are, in the proper sense of the word, crucial. They are crossroads. They are the points where space and time meet memory. Nora has tried to define a difference between milieu de mémoire and lieux de mémoire. The sites of memory are the “milieux”, the real environments of memory, but today, with our lack of memory, we have to be content with lieux de mémoire, places which
remind us of the past; a fragmented and scattered memory (Morley 87). As sites of memory become better known and are made collective by state machinery or the dominant groups of the society, so they can tend to homogenize varied local memories.

This state of recollection is termed collective memory and also understood as social or cultural memory. It is broadly defined as widely shared perceptions of the past. The analysis undertaken in this chapter is confined to an exploration of public sites of memory, spatial forms that are intended to affect a community at large. In this respect, the task of creating the memory space that is relevant and appropriate to the society that it serves is complex. Such spaces are affected by a multitude of forces: individuals, groups, institutions, history, and culture among others. The memorializing impulse of architecture manifests the memorial and the museum as artifacts of the past so that in many environments these physical space or architectures exist as repositories of a historical narrative.

Opposing Halbwachs’ view, Landsberg shows that in contrast with the collective memory, which serves to reinforce and naturalize a group’s identity, prosthetic memories are not the property of a single group, but allow collective horizons of experience, since the past that prosthetic memories open up are available to individuals across racial or ethnic lines, across divisions between victims and perpetrators. In summary, prosthetic memories are not natural or authentic but are constituted at a personal level because they suppose a mediated experience of the event, they are incorporated, just like an artificial limb, are interchangeable in their quality of goods for symbolic consumption, and build not only subjectivities, but mediated collective identifications, opening the way towards the construction of counter-hegemonic public spheres. They are also an argument that “affective power might be mobilized to have a similar kind of political potential as conceptual power” (Landsberg Prosthetic Memory 4).

Landsberg defines prosthetic memories as particular forms of public cultural memory, the memory of a past that has not been directly experienced, and it emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theatre or museum. In this moment of contact, an
experience occurs through which a person sutures himself or herself into a larger historical narrative. In this process, the person does not simply learn about the past intellectually but takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live in the traditional sense (Landsberg *Prosthetic Memory* 222).

Landsberg’s approach is circumscribed in a mediological perspective: prosthetic memory is a particular case of “prosthetic extensions”, describing the functioning of communication technologies. The term is not inherently positive or negative but value-neutral. Landsberg puts forth the argument that despite their inauthenticity, prosthetic memories are personal memories since they result from engaged and experientially oriented encounters with the mass media’s various technologies of memory. These confrontations are sensorial and the negotiation of meaning is made by reference not only to the art object itself (which takes part in this negotiation with its own inde icality) but with the individual’s prior experiences. Moreover, prosthetic memory targets a public past, not a single individual’s or group’s possession, although its sources can be private. In her works, Landsberg claims that such prosthetic memories allow for a new radical politics of empathy. Drawing on a phenomenological account, she discusses empathy in contrast to sympathy concluding:

Unlike sympathy, empathy does not depend on a ‘natural’ affinity or some kind of essential underlying connection between the two subjects. Empathy, in this account, is a way of understanding the other without having actually undergone the other’s experiences. Empathy recognizes the alterity of identification and the necessity of negotiating distances and is therefore essential to any ethical relation to the other” (Landsberg *Prosthetic Memory* 24).

In this approach, empathy is not only aimed at understanding the other but a way of “inhabiting other people’s memories as other people’s memories and thereby respecting and recognizing the difference” (Landsberg *Prosthetic Memory* 24).
As James Young would put it, such forms articulate a void; they present absence. It is this sense of loss that provokes in those who visit and remember at these sites a sense of shock, perhaps something akin to trauma. Young argues that it is this shock that provokes remembrance of things not witnessed (a vicarious or secondary witnessing) and it is these physical and spatial forms that act as conduits of trauma. Young seems to suggest that the concept should not be applied to recently created sites, which seek to commemorate something that happened in the near past: a link must be found, connecting the different cultural memory sites, and allowing us to understand both the identity and the memory of a group or a community. One of them is knowing what part of the history we are undergoing and writing will finally become part of the present when this present we are now inhabiting is already a vague and distant reality. History is not futurology, so it is in the hands of future generations to determine which memory sites of what is now our present will remain significant in a still distant future.

The idea of ‘site’ is predicated upon the deconstruction of the museum rhetoric, which entails the recognition that an artifact is not the unmediated objectification of the past. However, by rhetorical sleight of hand, the museum ascribes such a status to the artifact allowing it to conflate evidence that an event happened with evidence that it happened in certain ways, thus naturalizing the museum’s interpretation of the event. In truth, the meaning of an artifact is dependent upon its narrativization. So, in spite of the agendas of those who sponsor and curate the exhibition, it is the museum visitor who might be able to re-read the exhibitionary narrative and, more importantly, read it against the grain (Young *The Texture* 93).

Ultimately, the essential difference between the two approaches can be better understood if one conceptualizes these memorial transmissions as a communication process and focuses on the position of the receiver in this process: in the case of post-memory, the receiver is included from the very beginning, they are already a part of the community whose identity is reinforced through the processes of remembering, while in the case of prosthetic memory, the receiver is allegedly an outsider who is to be included, through empathy, in a community that does not necessarily precede the process of prosthetic remembering, but is constituted through it. In our view, the two
concepts can be conceived as the extremes of a scale describing the possible approaches to conceptualizing a re-appropriation of the past by the generation after and can be systematically linked with the design of a museum as a memory device.

The purpose of a memorial is to stand as a symbol of an important event, person or object that cannot be physically experienced. Thus a memorial is a ritualized substitute of presence; its purpose is to function as a “corporeal presence to mediate the absence”. Usually, it is designed as a commemorative space where the act of memorialization fixes meaning over time by attaching them to physical museums or places, and by repetition and restructuring in rituals of remembrance. A museum is sometimes misused as a synonym for a memorial however, the former term carries with it the connotation of a bigger size and a grandiose scale. Young suggests that the word museum implies “triumph and self-aggrandizement”. Counter-museumality is the places of memory which do not allow for the fixing of memory, whether through the location/object’s physical or emotional ambiguity. The counter-museum embraces as explained by Nora feels is the most important characteristic of a memorial:

For if we accept that the fundamental purpose of the ‘lieux de memoire’ (location of memory) is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immobilize death...in order to capture maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs it is also clear that the lieu de memoire only exists because of their capacity for metamorphosis an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable of their ramifications (Realms 47).

Through their ambivalent forms and meaning, counter-museums are extremely adaptable to any meaning that is assigned to them. When the social structure finds that it must memorialize a violation of its own contemporary ideologies, the memorial created is a counter, a counter-museum, which encourages ephemeral and personal interaction through movement and touch. Counter-museums are commonly used in Holocaust memorials and in memorials to provide a space for unpopular voices of terror.

According to Nora’s doctrine, Counter-museums do not perform the duty of substituting a connection to the past in a way that is appropriate for the people who share the meaning of imprisonment and its associated terrors. These museums are counter-museums in that they are purposefully hidden, demanding the viewer
remember without a mnemonic. Yet it is the participation of the viewer that transforms something so horrific as the killing of thousands of pilgrims during Operation Bluestar into something able to be psychologically processed. By interacting with a museum’s wall, the emotion of terror, shame are imparted without causing the viewer to be overcome by guilt or the desire to ignore the intended message.

Moreover, a counter-museum is a tool of the designer and the larger cultural structure, though the purpose of such a design is purportedly healing and resuming productive society rather than to promote social cohesion through exultation. Despite the additions to the memorial, which were an attempt to push museumality and other classical constraints on the memorial it is still the gallery or wall? Which dominates the visitor experience of the memorial and the wall is minimalist in the extreme. Not all contemporary memorials are counter-museums. There is no one definition of grief, loss or terror to be found at the central Sikh museum which makes it easier to relate to as an individual and serves memory to the collective history of an event, and as particular topical threads are emphasized over others. The generation that fought both in and against Operation Bluestar is aging and what will become of this incredibly emotional memorial, when the people who knew the events first-hand are gone? Will visitors still think beyond the gallery? What sort of memory will they generate? Will the gallery even continue to be a counter-museum? Counter museums can only mimic the individualized fulfillment of the fleeting memorial action on the part of the viewer; they cannot do it on their own. Understanding the role of ephemeral action in memorialization will lead to fewer feeble memorials and a better understanding of the intangible heritage practices that influence them.

Contemporary memorial theorists such as James E. Young and Maria Sturken recognize that the space in which memory exists can influence how an individual or a group remember events and the past. What is remembered and how that remembrance is conducted directly influence the existence of a culture and its conditions. Young and Sturken along with other scholars recognized the political and power value of creating and maintaining a memorial space.
While reconnoitering the phenomenon of the museum and the memorial sites as expressions for a particular group, Young defines that ‘counter-memorial’ is a memorial that uses passing action on the part of visitors to come to terms with a past conflict and a large scale tragedy. Places provide a public form to mourn and to comfort the everyday realities of discrimination. Consequences of memorialization in the digital age include changes in storage and retrieval techniques that fundamentally alter what is and what is not preservable.

Memorial as an expression of the continuity and uniqueness, connect the present with the past and the future as well. Young admits that it is the manipulation of space which manipulates the state of memory that is not the group remembering itself. Instead of allowing the past to become a rigidity in its museumal forms, we would vivify memory through the memory work itself whereby events, their recollection and the role, museums play in our lives remain animate, and never completed or as a finality. Their connection to the event or person in question is tenuous, distant or maybe even non-existent. Geoffrey Cubitt contends that memorials may reflect the uneven distribution of power within a society but it is also the field with which different groups and communities seek to establish the legitimacy of their interest and the term of their past and its continued participation in the nation’s history (73). Young notes that memorials by themselves remain inert and are dependent on visitors for whatever memory they finally produce. The powerful may build a structure or a museum to their desired form, but they cannot force participation in the making or reception of the memorial in the way they anticipate. Sub groups who are often marginalized socially and politically, such as religious and ethnic minorities, express their grief through resistance against those controls in the form of ephemeral actions and objects when creating memorials.

Nora coined the concept of a place of memory to designate those artifacts that where collective memory crystallizes and secretes itself. The concept, which was create to analyze the French memory, soon became involved in discussions about the advisability of applying it to other countries. A society's public memory can be observed in several spheres such as political actors or groups, public discussions, and memory sites. The chapter has focused on the latter, in order to both study the
possible uses of the sites and to examine their probable limitations when applied to specific ethnic group engrossed in memorial struggles. Bearing this in mind, I have chosen to observe the concept from the viewpoint of what has happened in Punjab in the 1980s and 1990s in connection with the recent past. According to Nora: To be considered as such, these sites must be definable in the three senses of the word: ‘material, symbolical and functional’, all in different degrees but always present. On the other hand, what makes them a memory site is the interplay of memory and history, the interaction of both factors, which allows their reciprocal over-determination. From the very beginning, the will to remember must be present. Otherwise, the memory sites will only be historical sites, states Nora. Thus, what makes it a memory site is both its nature as a crossroad of different memory roads and its capacity to live on despite being constantly remodelled, retaken, and revisited. A neglected memory site is, at most, the memory of a place.

I

Established in 1958 at Amritsar, the Central Sikh Museum exhibits paintings of Sikh gurus, saints, Sikh warriors and other prominent Sikh leaders who have contributed to the enhancement of the Sikh religion. It has a rich collection of coins, old arms, and ancient manuscripts. It also houses an excellent library. The Museum contains paintings by great Sikh artists, rare pencil sketches, musical instruments, rarest stringed instrument and guns of Sikh Raj. SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee) is in the process of restoring this Museum along with a new Interpretation Centre in the Complex. The journey into a Sikh museum is not only an exercise in seeking knowledge but also an affirmation of one’s faith. Here, the authority of the museum combines with the power of faith to create an authoritative version of Sikh heritage. And, what gets presented as heritage is best understood in the light of the politics that produces it. Sikh museums reveal a fascinating intersection of Sikh popular art with history, faith, identity, and politics, making them the key to understanding how the Sikh community looks at its past.

This study uses memory in the Golden temple, Amritsar as a springboard for an analysis of the mechanisms around the production of memory and the construction of memory space. Collective and cultural memories are often altered according to
political expediency, with subtle inclusions and omissions assisting to convey specific engendered meanings. Yet representations of the past are simultaneously shaped by the desire to appear accurate, to reflect truthful and honest accounts, and in so doing address the needs of the public. The complexity of this position of memorial-as-honest account notwithstanding, the deliberateness of such an approach offers insights into how societies and nation-states determine what to remember, who and how, in the context of political expediency.

Museums and memorials, as deliberately conceived memory spaces, become, to some extent, a physical manifestation of the past and a revelation of the attitudes to the future. Such built forms assist in perpetuating national myths, and in doing so facilitate a form of carefully constructed collective memory. These two in combination can become a significant force in the production of national identity through the creation of accessible mythologies of the past in built form. As a result, their treatment establishes an attitude to the past, one which may set a precedent for the future.

Photographs placed in a museum further develop a frame that reflects the reflection of the past which, in turn, helps a spectator to make one’s own frame of the event when such events are on the verge of being forgotten. As an instrumental tool, photographs or images become decisive to capture space and the time of the past and the present, the individual and the society. The photographs invoke a particular representation of the past for some while taking a universal significance for others and play an important role in disseminating other’s memory too. Being a kind of ‘sensory memory’, visual presentation/images effect or appeal emotions directly. Therefore, a photograph and memory go hand in hand. If it were not for these visual images and their repetitive circulation and appearance in media, the public would have forgotten the tragic past by now. Walter Lipmann said in 1922, “photographs have the kind of authority over imagination today, which the printed word had yesterday, and the spoken word before that. They seem utterly real. They come, we imagine, directly to us, without human meddling and the whole process of observing, describing, repeating and then imagining get accomplished through a subjective lens.
Photographs or any other visual image work as an objective support for written words and floating truths.

The gallery of “Saka Neela Tara” showcases the incidents and the tragedy which happened during the tragic operation. But the gallery has remained silent for those who lost their lives in the aftermath, for those Hindu victims who also got victimized during the operation, for those ‘martyrs’ who lost their lives outside the temple, in Amritsar and Punjab. In 2017, almost after thirty three years of the tragedy, Satpal Danish, an independent photographer based in Amritsar, has come up with some rare photographs of 1984. Most noted, probably, for his haunting images of the demolished Golden temple. The framed terror speaks volumes about the terror that occurred in Amritsar on the dreadful day of June 5, 1984. Satpal’s pictures, like previous portraits, attempt to freeze time and immortalize a lost memory. The identity of hundreds of corpses remains unknown even today like thousands of others who lost their lives outside the traumatic site of the temple during the operation. The photo has reappeared over the past years in media, newspapers, documentary films and Sikh Studies Journals, websites, and blogs. For those of us who did not experience it personally, we know about the times in fragments through such images. And this is how memory works, floats and speaks. The photograph has attained an iconic status in the Sikh psyche and the event is often remembered in terms of this photograph, particularly during the first week of June. The narratives and images that are shown through his photography have made us revive the collective cultural trauma and the experience of those tragic moments.

Retrieving the lessons of the struggle and the survival as well as the strength to take forward the fight for justice, the museum tends to derive such representations. While acting as a kind of reference point for the traumatic past, the Central Sikh Museum is invested not only with the constructed memories of a common past but also with the memories of their lives for the people of Punjab and Sikhs who are overseas. In a way, these representational memorial sites reveal to us unknown faces with their unknown past and become a part of our memory. One photograph after the other showed how a society was ruined of its constituents. Such representation endorses a dual function; firstly, they interpret the event and compel a revelation of truth. It also calls for the concerned parties to assume responsibility for the events. Thus photographs become powerful tools for interpretation making meaningful
counter discourse that rely on the pillars of technical supremacy, artistic imagination, intellectual discourses, and the substantiality they bear. As Hirsch puts it:

Photography’s relation to loss and death is not to mediate the process of individual and collective memory but to bring the past back in the form of a ghostly revenant, emphasizing, at the same time, its immutable and irreversible pastness and irretrievability (The Generation 20).

There are other images of 1984 which instill hatred, anger, and despair among people. Such exhibition through a visual medium shows the extent of damage that was wreaked on the hapless people. There are various photographs that have been provoking anger beyond the lines of Amritsar and today are seen as photographs stimulating the traumas and the scars that the history of Sikh heritage suffered during those tumultuous times of 1984 in Punjab. The images of the third ghallughara raise significant moral and ethical concerns. It shows a new aspect of reality that was earlier missed or ignored. Earlier, these photographs just conveyed a sense of pain that accompanied the trauma. But with time, such photographs convey not just the horrors of past times, but a deeper level of collective hurt and the entirety of that experience which may carry many hidden wounds. These narratives and images have become representative of the trauma suffered by the Sikh community. Moreover, with each passing day and because of advances in technology, these are now becoming more and more digitized and hence permanent. This means the past seamlessly enters the present and along and also acts as a testimonial tool.

These photographs or images of past tragedies no longer remain simply a memory but give us an impulse to fight for their cause and become wary of similar disastrous and unethical human action in the future. During anniversaries and meetings dedicated to the traumatic days of June 1984, it is not the present that is represented, but the past, through the narratives that were available in oral forms immediately after the tragedy. Particularly the repositories of visual memories, images, and motion pictures facilitate and foster common memories. They reiterate the role played by photographs in forming memoirs of the past. Though we are connected, neither as a survivor nor as a victim, physically with the memorial site, it connects us with the experience of victims and gives us closeness as well as a distance
with the Operation Bluestar through visual presentation. Another photograph that appears in the media shows some victims who were captured by the army personnel. Such a photograph portrays both individual agony and a sickening collective despair.

More scholarly work in this direction is likely as the collective memory field continues to expand beyond its traditional base in sociology, history, and art history and embraces the work of geographers, landscape historians, ethnographers, archaeologists, and other academic practitioners. *Militants and Migrants* by Radhika Chopra is an excellent example, investigating how the historical lessons of this site are continuously reshaped or even ignored as they are put into practice by re-enactors and consumed by viewers. Few scholars have attempted to theorize the relationship between commemoration and tradition, what we might call the exterior and the interior faces of historical consciousness. On the one hand are public sites and rituals of memory, and on the other hand are ingrained habits of thought and action that persist in individuals, families, and communities across long spans of time. While few scholars would agree with Nora that interior memory has disappeared, most scholars have focused on the exterior struggles to construct a memory in one form rather than another. Events, people, and political identities may be remembered through a series of different memorials, spread across space. Each may present the facade of completeness but in fact be a fragment, a shard that emerges as connected or contested within different modes and politics of remembrance.

Chopra delves further into the issue of memory lapse, to ask if the politics of remembrance of a troublesome history whittle away at the exhibits of the Central Sikh Museum, the museum within the Golden Temple. During Operation Bluestar, the building of the museum and a great deal of the medieval art of the Sikh kingdoms were destroyed by fire. If the ritual of *Ghallughara* is a way to remember a traumatic event, the reconstruction of the museum was a way of restoring a history to a community (Militants 4). What dialogues between the sacred and the historic are evident in the Central Sikh Museum? How is the event of Bluestar represented? Does the very fact of being where it is, afford the Central Sikh Museum the power to harness or convert a myth into a political narrative? In a way, the particular location of the museum within the restored gurudwara charges the Central Sikh Museum with
a mission- to continue to remember the destruction. The Akal Takht presents a facade of calm continuity. It is the paintings in the museum that keep alive the memory of its mutilation. The Central Sikh Museum is simultaneously the museum and the memorial, synchronizing the pedagogical and the emotive aspects of both.

The wall of Martyrs of 1984 or “Saka Neela Tara” can be classified into three parts by analyzing three particular portraits. Firstly, the portrait titled Tank da ik khali khol te challe kartoos, June 1984 is dedicated to a 1987 painting of the destroyed Takht, with a caption that unequivocally states “Sri Akal Takht fauji hamleh toh baad (6 June 1984)” (The Akal Takht after the army assault, 6 June 1984). Secondly, in another portrait, a painting of the destroyed dome of the Takht is set at the centre of a group of portraits of men who died during Operation Bluestar or were put to death by the Indian state as they were viewed as traitors or assassins. However, in the captions of the paintings hung in the Museum they are described as Shaheed (martyrs). Thirdly, and the most important mark in the museum is the Wall of 1984 Martyrs. Passing through the passage from medieval to modern martyrdom it is clear that we also traverse a particular version of Sikh history. Read as a set, it includes the paintings of medieval martyrs’ forefront along with the persecution of religion and innocent believers of the faith. The two ‘sets’ of paintings present a contrast between portraiture styles, but their significance lies in the revision of political personhood. It is the portrayals of medieval martyrs that enable us to fully appreciate the style in which the Bluestar martyrs appear to the viewer (Chopra 9). While analyzing the first painting, as Chopra explains: “Innocence is accentuated by the overwhelming presence of women and children, sitting on the ground holding the bloodied bodies of children in their laps, or standing in mute supplication to men with reddened swords and butchered corpses of babies held upside down, or tossing bodies in the air to be caught on spears” (191).

The Sikh martyrs of the Khalsa have their own wall in the museum. Unlike their medieval forbearers, for whom fortitude is central, and an action plot provided, or the early moderns reproduced as newsprint corpses, Bluestar martyrs face out toward the viewers, resembling faces in passport photographs, looking directly at the camera/viewer. The photographic replication suggests not only a realist aesthetic
sensibility but also proposes an identity of ‘resemblance’ through the direct gaze. Shabegh Singh, the mastermind behind the fortifications in the Temple complex and Satwant Singh, one of the assassins of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, are painted in their full army and police uniforms; Beant Singh, the other assassin of the Prime Minister, wears a coat and a necktie, with a carefully tied turban, immediately recognizable to the viewer as a presentation of the public self.

Memorials, such as the one, that are erected to mark contentious events become controversial because they dispute collective narratives of events (Young 93) and expose ‘the tension between established commemorative practice and emergent political concerns’ (Zerubavel 147). Chopra’s orientation of research is based on the controversies around the commemoration of Khalistan movement’s key figure, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala and the commemoration enacted in the first week of June within the Golden Temple complex to ‘remember’ Operation Bluestar, make little reference to Bhindranwale who was killed during the army operation, along with other supporters. No one, however, seemed quite certain what constituted Bhindrawale’s legacy or how to remember him (Militant and Migrant 4). While discussing commemoration and its politics, Chopra contends that controversy and commemoration walk hand-in-hand during rituals performed at the site of these memorials, so that ritual performance and the physical layout conjointly become a chronicle, enunciating what is to be remembered or eclipsed (A Museum 3). As a manifestation of the past, a memorial is deeply entrenched in the present and its meanings are continuously ‘opened’ through the dialectics between flexible pasts and volatile presents that reconfigure them (Battaglia 12). Rituals of commemorations aside, there is also the materiality of a memorial. A plaque, a shrine, a festschrift or a memorial lecture are purposive and ‘active’, but also distinctive in the manner they evoke or elide memory. As a mode of inscription, the laying of bricks for the memorial Gurudwara within the Golden Temple complex in 2012 actively sought to orient builders and believers towards two sets of sacred spaces, but also to weave these spaces together. As an imagined architectural text, the controversial memorial gurudwara is tethered to the built environs of the Golden Temple and its treasured memories. But it is also disruptive because it exceeds the space within which it is
located. The uproar generated by the mere act of bricklaying gestures towards the capacity of the ‘forbidden’ and the controversial to alter and transcend its own idiosyncrasy as it subverts the terms of debate and vigorously reorients remembrance and forgetting.

Given its location and its holdings of sacred art, this museum is treated as sacrosanct space, a home for revered beings and sacred things. It approximates a memorial of sorts since it houses chronicles of Gurus and of martyrs who died defending other places of their faith. The museum, therefore, is a space where belief and historical events are woven together into a visual chronicle of an embattled community and its defense against oppressive states. The various images in the museum suggest that these paintings are more than exhibits and they are religious portrayals meant to be viewed as devotional objects evoking belief, memory, and history all at once.

Inextricable from each other, reality and the past are never synchronous. Although photography still constitutes a form of historical witnessing as well as generating an artifact from that time of witnessing, the dislocation of the referent for Barthes means that photographs counter memory work. If photographs counter the memory work that they provoke, then the Central Sikh Museum, in its affectiveness, recalls for its viewers, not life but loss.

The importance of the portrait must be emphasized as it is highly esteemed as a genre. This is because, according to the standard view, in a successful portrait the viewer is confronted not only with the ‘‘original,’’ ‘‘unique,’’ subjectivity of the portrayer, but also that of the portrayed (Alphen 34). The photographic portrait, therefore, springs from a bourgeois concept of subjectivity or selfhood, distinguished not only by the (perceived) transcendent nature of subjectivity itself but by the photographer’s unique art, rendering the ability to equate the image with the essence of such an essentialized self (Alphen 36). Rather than inscribed with the contingency of a subjectivity staged (performed) or captured, the photograph in this bourgeois concept ‘‘refers to a human being who is (was) present outside the portrait’’ in a permanent sense.

In this regard, the portraits of Shabeg Singh, Satwant Singh, and Beant Singh are significant at many levels. An identity of sameness is first established (like the
viewers Shabeg Singh and Satwant Singh are spoken of as being in the police force, or the army, or born in specific villages); and then the likeness is disrupted in the captioning by the use of the third person honorific “aap ji” and ‘Shaheed Bhai’. The visual vocabulary reaches out toward the viewer but the lexicon of deference simultaneously creates a distance through respect. The captions below the portrait painted in 1997 of Jinda and his co-conspirator Sukha, both accused and hung for the assassination of General A.S. Vaidya, Chief of Army Staff at the time of Operation Bluestar, address each man in the plural honorific, and end with the words “9 October 1992…Phansi di saza ditti, jo eihnah neh hasdaiyan-hasdaiyan pravan karke Sikh qaum da nam roshan kitta” (9 October 1992…he was sentenced to hang, a punishment of death he embraced laughing, illuminating the name of the Sikh community).

Moving on from the portraits to The Ghallughara Dihara, a post-1990s commemorative ritual inserted into the ceremonial calendar, produced the Golden Temple as a memorial space enfolding an entire community, we further see an evolution of meaning. The act of bricklaying diluted this claim, disputing the inclusiveness of commemoration, seeming to contend that the Ghallughara as enacted is, in fact, a ‘partial account’ that accentuates certain memories of loss as vital while it deliberately casts out others as unwanted. The charge of the partial quality of remembrance and the suggestion that the Ghallughara was ‘not enough’ to commemorate the carnage generated demands for a more comprehensive memorialization. Quite apart from the remembrance at the specific location of the Golden Temple, other forms of commemoration in spatially distinct mnemonic theaters projected discrete memories of the event and the period. The charge of incompleteness emanated not only from among the supporters of Khalistan but also from the Indian state, which in its turn configured particular memories as paramount.

In the same vein, the Wall of Truth of Delhi displays the names of the non-Sikh victims of 1984. What happened in India in 1984 should serve as a telling reminder as to what happens when human decency takes a backseat to parochialism that runs rampant in the garb of nationalism. For a long time, the victims of 1984 were talked about in the same breath as Sikh secessionists, and any act expressing solidarity with them or criticizing the state for allowing the mayhem to take place was tantamount to supporting the secessionist cause and, therefore, anti-national. Although
memorials are often built as free-standing structures in public places, many memorials can be found inside religious places/spaces. This memorial site is one that expresses national grief over the atrocities on Sikhs and mourning over the thousands of lives lost. It was on 15 January 2017, thirty-three years after the carnage of 1984 the memorial site of the Gurudwara Rakabganj becomes firmly associated with a reconciliatory symbolism. As we approach the year 2017, the centennial anniversary of the 1984 pogrom at which very few living witnesses of the violence have survived, it remains to be seen what new symbolism will be attached to the memorial site and it memorial spaces. The foundation stone of the memorial was laid on 12 June 2013. The metal plates, titled “Dastan-e-Indira Gandhi” and “Dastan-e-Rajiv Gandhi”, were presented to the office-bearers of the DSGMC by the 1984 riot victim’s council. As a "reminder of injustice" towards the victims, "The Wall of Truth" has been built in an area of 2500 square meter and at a cost of 2.25 Crore at the Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Complex near Parliament. The memorial wall also has four sculptures - Humanity, Equality, Humility, and Tolerance, each having their own significance.

Equally, widows of men killed in the Delhi riots of 1984 professed a victimhood that could not be encased within the Bluestar memorialization. Three decades after the genocide of 1984, the DSGPC has built a memorial wall that builds theoretically on a uniting and reconciling construction of memory, which attempts to lead societal healing through truth and justice. This is the place where the engraved names narrate the cries of 1984 and evoke the traumatic memories of anti-Sikh Pogrom. The Wall of Truth, the first Sikh memorial in the country, the memorial is a tribute to the innocent members of the Sikh community, who were killed during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in which over 3,000 Sikhs were killed following the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31st October 1984. More than three decades later, it is significant that what happened in 1984 continues to become an issue whenever Punjab and Delhi go to the assembly elections. The decision to construct the memorial in the first place was taken in 2013. On 15 January 2017, the memorial site was inaugurated by widows of five victims in the presence of Sikh leaders and preachers. Inevitably, the political voices are once again vocal, demanding justice for the riot victims. It establishes the idea that violence and its traumatic effects cannot be simply relegated to the forgotten past.
II

The Wall of Martyrs of 1984, in Amritsar, that stands as a constant reminder of the loss of life associated with 1984, is a pivotal point for memorialization of thousands of individuals who were victims of the atrocity. Additionally, the memorial site plays an important informative role as it displays the historicity and mediated information of the events of June 1984 wherein visitors may learn about the state-nation conflict and how the tragedy of ‘84 has shaped the cultural memory of India in general and Sikhs in particular. The memorial wall is a sobering reminder of the sacrifices that ordinary people were forced to commit during the three days of turmoil and numerous other conflicts. In the Sikh tradition, Gurudwara museums are incredibly productive cultural forms which are the primary articulation point of the Sikh commemorative imperative. It forms a part of broader means by which, in Brian Axel’s words, ‘many Sikhs have established a set of practices that remake the private scene of national torture into a transnational spectacle of subjectification’ (*Nation’s Torture* 150). It is one of the primary mediums through which identities are constituted, maintained, and contested. Events such as Partition, the Khalistan movement, Operation Bluestar in 1984 and its aftermath have influenced the community’s representation of its own heritage. The angular marble walls merge and rise in a zigzag manner. These are symbolic of the stuffy lanes, in which thousands of Sikhs were slaughtered in November 1984.

There is also a well-like structure, with space to lay wreaths, that has been dedicated to the unidentified victims of the carnage. The future generations need to be made aware of the genocide especially children of the second generation born after 1984. The wall would be a symbol of injustice done to the Sikhs and Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of the country is behind it installing the justice. The four sculptures of memorials: humanity, equality, humility, and tolerance. Each symbol has its own significance portraying the beliefs of the Sikh Community alongside the rights owned by every citizen. How can memorials engage new generations with little or no knowledge of what they commemorate? Each generation, indeed every visitor, views the memorial wall through a different lens to draw relevance to their own lives. It becomes the mechanism by which public archives and institutions have been able both to re-emboby and re-individualize cultural and archival memory. It enables
individuals to see and touch the chord of the past and also reanimate it by undoing the finality of the photographic take.

Intrinsically, the experience of walking beside the Wall of Sikh Martyrs becomes an inclusive and personal memory for the visitors since the wall manifests actual episodes of violence of 1984. The narratives of trauma and collective testimonies are structured to evoke the feelings and emotions of terror and violence, regardless of whether the viewer experienced the violence or not. Thus, even as the memorial’s capacity to manifest genuine memory of the event and provoke remembrance fades, its elements work together to re-create the memorialization process for new viewers, keeping the collective memory of the event alive. The effort to represent in the museum form, consisting of both the violent and the formation of being Sikh in other terms, side by side, portrays this connection, and how violence is seen in a larger context. The corridor walls are a memorial of a different order, inscribed with names of those whose bodies were discovered within the walls and could be identified, and even those who were not cremated 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.

Within the Golden Temple, remembrance of the destruction of the sacred complex was enunciated in a familiar language of ritual and in museum portraiture. No one, however, seemed quite certain what constituted Bhindranwale’s legacy or how to remember him. A contest over commemoration, overtly focusing on ‘styles’ of remembrance but underwritten by an apprehension of unrest, seems germane to this controversy. Legislators feared that evoking Bhindranwale would be inflammatory, and having his photograph within a protected sacred space would confer upon his memory the legitimacy of militant violence and convert it into a heroic history. The assurance that photographs would be prohibited in the new memorial seems to signal an unwitting acknowledgment of the popularity and power of photographs of Bhindranwale already circulating in the bazaars of Amritsar.

The fact that the memorial took the shape of a Gurudwara is central to the issue of remembering Bhindranwale. Evocative of usurpations that Weber spoke of so eloquently in his discussions on illegitimacy and domination, the usurpation of the sacred space and the seizure of memory set apart the birth of this memorial from other
formally sanctioned sacred structures – for in its material form this is a Gurudwara within a Gurudwara, a shrine within a shrine. In the scriptural religion of Sikhism, sacred texts are housed within Gurudwaras – or ‘gateways’ (dwara) to the divine. The most well-known is the Golden Temple, in the city of Amritsar, with its eponymous Golden Temple. Gurudwaras and takhts, as seats of religious authority, are also places for acknowledged shaheeds or martyrs, who have a special place in Sikhism. As a religion born in ferment and resistance to the imperial Mughal state, its medieval gurus or spiritual spokesmen were deemed saint-soldiers, a key concept in Sikhism since the fifteenth century (Macleod The Sikhs 195). In the same vein, a Sikh shaheed who died defending the faith provides testimony of their sahadat, their faith, and with their blood. Sacred space shared by scripture and shaheed imagine the latter as endowed with a powerful commitment to the Sikh faith, its doctrines, symbols, and its Gurus (Fenech 17).

The present study also encourages the researchers to go deeper and see the “silences and muted voices” of the pages of history. The portrait of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala triggers questions such as who was ‘Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala? Why did he bring arms in the ambiences of the holiest shrine of Sikhs? Being a follower of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhs, who also abolished the idea of Ideal worship and the idealism of ‘Guru’, how could Bhindrawala become the reason of violence that occurred in Akal Takhat? What is the politics behind the portraits of Bhindrawala that are hanging on the Gurudwara walls of Punjab and overseas? Ironically, Sikhism tends to resist the practice of ideal worship and tradition of idealism and yet there’s idealism hovering over his image. The commemorations enacted in the first week of June within the Golden Temple complex that ‘remember’ Operation Bluestar, make little reference to Bhindranwala who was killed during the army operation, along with other supporters. In part, this may have had to do with the fact that for a number of years following his death in 1984 the Indian state prohibited any construction of a memorial in his name. Even more than state prohibition, however, the continual allusion to the destroyed Akal Takht in Ghallughara commemorations and the simultaneous eclipse of Bhindranwala suggest that remembering him posed a dilemma for many within the Sikh community as much as it did for the state.
The location of the museum within the sacred complex seems to charge the museum with a mission to continue to remember the destruction of sacred things and spaces. Within the complex as seen today, the Akal Takht presents a facade of calm continuity. It is the paintings in the museum that keep alive the memory of its mutilation. Paintings in the museum are an assortment of ‘event’ and ‘biography’. The death of individuals across four broad periods of Sikh history creates a visual narrative of the carnage of pilgrims, beginning with the massacres by Ahmed Shah Durrani in the two Ghallughara of medieval Sikh history, followed by images of resistance to the colonial state, including the bloodbath at Jallianwala Bagh, deaths during Punjabi Suba agitations organised against the linguistic reorganization of states in independent India, and finally during Operation Bluestar.

Post-1984, the portrayals and paintings are clearly signposted in an earmarked gallery, including what Chopra calls the ‘1984 wall’. Simultaneously, the display of Bhindranwale in shop signage grew to dominate the bazaar spaces that surround the sacred complex. Small vinyl images circulated in the streets on the backs of taxis or stuck onto petrol tanks of motorbikes. It is hard to establish whether street art was a response to the installation of the portrait or circulated in sync with the debates generated prior to the installation. In either event, street art had a way of exerting itself on the more formal displays within the museum, particularly upon the singular disposition of the portrait. Re-entering the spaces of the sacred, it is clear that however elaborate or emotive the museum displays or ritual commemorations of Ghallughara Dihara that followed Operation Bluestar, for years a feeling of incompleteness and non-closure remained. These tangential, almost muted, references were clearly unsatisfactory evocations for a person many identified as the embodiment and animating spirit of Khalistan. The refusal to acknowledge the death sat awkwardly within the larger rituals of post-Bluestar remembrance and memorialization.

Location denotes its own understanding of boundaries between the sacred and the political and are viewing of how things or the person appears as concurrently sacred and political while the act of viewing becomes expressive of belief and political engagement at once (Chopra Militant 97).

In specifying prohibitions of guns and ‘modern’ weaponry in the commissioned portrait, perhaps the orthodox Gurudwara establishment hoped to
normalize remembrance, making Bhindranwale the defender of the Takht, but the shrine as the emotional centre of remembrance. Any visit to the museum makes it clear, however, the portrait of demolished of Golden temple arouses greater interest. Like emotions aroused by sacred things, the rasa of this image sets it apart. An anxious sign at the corner of the portrait fixed some years after the installation prohibits photography in three languages. It is a peculiar sign that forbids one visual form, while permitting another, suggesting an acknowledgment of a hierarchy of pre-eminence between the two images. The marked concentration of viewers’ attention unequivocally suggests the relegation of the Takht as mere evidence of Bhindranwale’s shahadat (martyrdom/sacrifice), and his death as the primal wound suffered by the Sikh nation. The panic provoked by the viewer’s photograph reflects the fear of street art and internet communications creating an inevitable intermixing passion with politics, a destabilization of the authorized memory. The truth of the sign, like the image portrayed, is that it triggers and evokes transgression.

The question remains whether in deflecting attention away from the commemorations of the destroyed Takht, and converting the architectural mutilation as a metaphor for Bhindranwale’s death, does the viewing accomplishes more than the Gurudwara authorities ever imagined when they conceded the demands for installation. It is important to go back to the image once again to discover, in its language of symbols, the potential movement, and the transformation affected by the pleasure of remembrance. Unlike other Bluestar martyrs, Bhindranwale is ‘in action’ even while the figure is still, the other elements position the man as possessing an exceptional power to surpass other martyrs. It does not need too much imagination to speculate that the transformation of a political figure to a divine person will require more than a portrait as a tribute; it was only going to be a matter of time for the man to move from being a photographed corpse hidden in an archive to a palpably emotive portrait, to a spiritual figure in need of his own space, the memorial Gurudwara, a shrine within a shrine. In and through the memorial, a militant is not likely to remain a martyr but will soar towards the cosmological ether, to craft a place among the chosen. Furthermore, the Central Sikh Museum has on display a list of 743 persons killed during Operation Bluestar which is a dubious figure as contested by many human rights organizations.
The power of the physical to preserve memories, however, has increasingly become something in which the average person can participate. While photography seems like an excellent way to make permanent a deceased individual’s physical appearance, photographs, the type with film negatives, are extraordinarily fragile. A photograph or film, like any “reality” is subject to subjective interpretation and as a frozen moment constitutes derived context. Are these semi-permanent documents of memory objective are even accurate? Philosophers like Assmann regards the photograph as the most reliable record of a past that longer exists—it is the lasting impression of a moment that has gone forever (Cultural Memory 209). However, much still relies on the viewer. A photograph or film, like any ‘reality’ is subject to subjective interpretation and as a frozen moment, it is deprived of context. Assmann observed “the simultaneously precise and vague memory of the image will take on a phantom life of its own as soon as it is separated from its narrative” (210). There is even the potential that eventually if the photograph continues to exist permanently, the objects ‘visible’, or the encoded meaning in the objects, will change they are unrecognizable. And whether real or not, a photograph and a film can easily influence how and what to remember.

Public memorials often have ‘‘spectacular” forms and the visitors’ feelings are affected primarily through relatively passive, distant reception of visual depictions and symbols. Instead, these designs present visitors’ bodies with intense and varied stimuli ranging from hearing, touch, temperature, and kinaesthesia. This undermines contemplation or introspection. Visitors explore a variety of physiological feelings, both pleasurable and unpleasurable. These physical feelings are intended to stimulate emotional ones; people should feel the purpose of the memorials rather than think them. But they come away with different impressions; most visitors’ actions appear hedonistic rather than mournful. Dreadful times produce special stories. Museums, rituals, shrines, and cenotaphs are set apart and sacred objects not only because they represent a place to recall the past but also in the telling and re-telling of what they are about, they enable different memories and forms of remembrance. Surprisingly, little literature exists on memorials in contemporary South Asia though there have been and continue to be areas in the region riddled by harsh conflicts and troublesome memories.
The study of the Central Sikh Museum and seeing Amritsar as a site of traumatic past(s) gives us the opportunity of putting the concept into practice, not only from the theoretical point of view but also with an empirical perspective; with any necessary adjustments necessary for a history of the present time. Nora pointed out that it was fundamental for the memory to have disappeared before dedicating a site to it, as it involves an object in which the past is taken up again in the present. In the 1990s, he suggested that places of memory are “like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded”. There they are, but the only active relationship that can be engaged in with them is the one proposed in Lieux: a second-degree relationship, produced by the reactivation of whatever history they hold. In the view of this historian, memory is only discussed when it no longer exists, when it has vanished. It is for this reason that the places of memory are, fundamentally, remains, the extreme form in which a commemorative conscience endures in a history that summons it, because it is unknown.

It is thus necessary to include forgetfulness and amnesia in the concept, not only in the case of the recent pasts but also for those that already appear to be dominant or agreed on by a society, as it is precisely here that most omissions may take place. However, we consider that there are some examples that contradict this statement, particularly when it comes to recent, violent pasts that have not yet been resolved by different sectors of a society, and when the community holds dissimilar memories of that past.

The new generations, the young people who have not known the facts of 1984 Punjab in any other way, will take these views and make them theirs and it may also happen that they will conceive their own versions. Thus it is understandable that certain names should call for debate because the various political players are not willing to see their vision of history erased from the public and urban spaces in our country and elsewhere. In fact, this multiplicity of versions, besides just leading us to question the status of truth in memory, demonstrates the desire of the different social actors to appropriate the past.

Memory space becomes a tangible manifestation of constructing a collected cultural memory. Amritsar is significant in recognizing the role of collective memory in facilitating reconciliation and in acknowledging the potency of individual accounts of the past. By seeking to create a broad narrative that addresses both the nationalistic
as well as the individual notions. This move, in turn, provides opportunities for the production of an inclusive memory space. It is hoped that through the integration of the individual and the collective memory, a shared sense of history will develop. In some respects, this acknowledgment identifies the difference between collective and individual memory, for one occurs at a personal level, private and is formed by a singular sense of the past, while the other becomes shared and shaped by a mutually determined recollection of the past. Collective memory becomes a form of authoritative memory, one sanctioned and reiterated by collective means so that it becomes incorporated into a collective version of the past. Physicality makes the intangible tangible rendering it true or at the very least more real. Ironically, however, it is the static, authoritative posture of traditional museums and memorials that renders a memory space so problematic. The memory embodied in the memory space is often criticized as being inaccessible, singular, and gradually silenced over time.

Furthermore, museums and memorials are no longer confined to the traditional limits of collection and display. The memory space is extending beyond the built to present a new kind of reality. This space marks the intersection between the museum and its artifact, so that either the built form itself becomes the artifact or the experience of visiting the space does. The city is filled with residual markers of this kind, both those that operate at a civic level and those that embody personal recollection. In this way, the cityscape becomes a palimpsest which reveals and conceals the events of the past according to residual built form. Many, if not all cities bear the signs of the past, constructed and scarred by acts of history. As relatively recent events, these acts are physically memorialized through the establishment and retention of spatial markers that form totems in the urban fabric. As nation-separatist encounters the transformations that accompany regime change, it is charged with the responsibility of tackling such spaces and reconciling the new environment with the impact of what has gone before. Furthermore, moves are made to produce new areas of memory space to create a contemporary built form that more accurately addresses the concerns of the current political regime.

The physical structures of memory operate within a broader realm of the cityscape that forms a canvas upon which the past can be traced. Site, space, and architecture can wordlessly convey the realities of a regime. As Nick Sheppard and Noelene Murray write:
We view cities as sites of memory and desire (and also fear and forgetting); as contested spaces given to plays of power and privilege, identity and difference; as palimpsests of historical experience, in which underlying strata disconcertingly erupt into those above; and as lived spaces in the everyday performance of urban life (61).

As iconic structures, memorials, and museums become the constructed markers of recollection within a cityscape which is also a collectively-sanctioned sphere for the production of shared memory, they operate in tandem with sites of trauma (structures that often assume a different kind of charge or significance that seems almost inherent in the site itself) to generate another form of recollection. It also suggests ways in which attitudes to architecture and those derived from it can contribute to the production of national narratives. The task of addressing these spaces operates as both a symbolic act and a touchstone for collective memory. In a way, the act of physical transformation, choosing which sites to retain, which to demolish and which to reconstruct, can also be understood as a form of selective recollection. The tale of the past, as it is understood according to the physical city, can be elided, filled in, blocked off or erased according to differing attitudes to history and shifting values over what is worth remembering. This reality refutes the notion that architecture exists as a permanent marker, for the built form is often only enduring as long as it conforms to the prevailing viewpoint. In fact, manipulation of the so-called ‘permanence’ of the space is a consequence of the construction and revision of authoritative narratives, for the act of eradication of physical space colludes with the notion of willful forgetting or selective remembering.

The difficulties inherent in redefining the built form, the questions around the production of memory and the latent significance of sites of trauma all contribute to the issues addressed here. Examining the specific production of differing modes of memory space, this chapter seeks to better understand the role that the collective production of memory space may play in a society undergoing radical change, growth, and redefinition. No matter how, “mediated and contaminated in the eye of the beholder” museum objects potentially have “a surplus of meaning that exceeds set ideological boundaries, opening spaces for reflection and counter-hegemonic memory” (Huyssen Present Pasts 15). Such a re-reading is, though, compelled by the resonance of the artifact. It is the aural nature of the artifact that makes it a potential
prop in the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic memory production. Such “relics” can never be presented “without mediation, without mise-en-scene” because they “have always been pulled into the present via that gaze that hit them” (Huyssen 33). So, the seduction, the secret they may hold is never only on the side of the object in some state of purity, as it were; it is always intensely located on the side of the viewer and the present as well. It is the live gaze that endows the object with its aura (Huyssen 33). The endowment of aura is dependent on “the object’s materiality and opaqueness”. On the one hand, the materiality of the artifact, registering its transcendence of time and space and survival to the present moment of exhibition, acts as a “guarantee against simulation,” provoking the viewer to perceive it as the unmediated objectification of the past itself (Huyssen Present Pasts 33). On the other hand, it can “never entirely escape the orbit of simulation and is even enhanced by the simulation of the spectacular mis-en-scene”. Under the gaze of the museum visitor, the materiality of the artifact resonates with the aura of the past for which the (fetishized) object now stands.

To recall Huyssen’s concept of it, to perceive or re-enchant the aураtic object is to perceive the past itself. As a site of controversy and contestation, museums are vehicles for the communication of certain ideas, ideals, beliefs, values or attitudes which are presented in such a way as to imply their very veracity in some concrete, tangible form. They are the visual representations of the ideological beliefs and, so, even from their inception, throughout the period of their construction and then far beyond their unveiling or inauguration, museums may, at least potentially, be the subject of contention and controversy. In this way, museums act as sources of friction and argument. Before they are completed, museums arouse controversy about how to say whatever they are intended to say and, afterward, about what they really mean. The controversy stems largely from the fact that a museum, by its very nature, is a representation of someone or something. Thus, as it is with any representation, a museum is open to any amount of conjecture or interpretation.

Museums often reveal an adherence to the collective version of history, or a singular narrative within many alternate versions and it is in their realization that they are ‘legitimate’ in what it is that is trying to be communicated. Yet, the messages ‘instilled’ in a museum are rarely, if ever, literal. Rather, they are rather physically-structured three-dimensional metaphors imbued with symbolic, semiotic information
which may often hide controversies or even shroud truth in some fictional representation or myth. According to Broszat museums are “cultural reifications” which reduce or ‘coarsen’ historical understanding by burying people and events beneath layers of myths and explanations.

It is in and through that interactional experience where a person gives meaning to a museum by engaging with the physical structure. Therefore, it is not the literal subject matter of the museum which gives the museum meaning, but rather its representational or metaphorical value: The audience takes up the afforded point of view and so comes to be aware of the subject matter as it is experienced from it. Museums often also encapsulate educational knowledge in their cognitive value and introduce a general pedagogy of civic duty: citizens share values and ideology and a historic meaning that, once mobilized by various sentiments, will play the affective role of living memory (Choay 201). Such sites and attractions which have undergone social, cultural, ideological or symbolic transformation may become discursive points of contention, contestation and/or conflicting narratives.

Built for posterity, museums are concrete representations of certain held beliefs belonging to a particular time, in a particular place, and for particular people. Nevertheless, Henri Lefebvre writes: An existing space [and in terms of the present discussion, we might well include museums here] may outlive its original purpose and the raison d’être which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, re-appropriated and put to a use quite different from its original one (Lefebvre 167). The doctrine insists that museums, whilst borne out of a specific time and place, are not restricted to that context but are continuously (re-)interpreted, used and re-used during their life histories as well as in later activities. It could be argued that a museum contributes to the telling part of the social narrative. Yet, it is ironic that it is in its stasis as a seemingly frozen face in the landscape’, that a museum exhibits a dynamic, ever-changing life.

These artifacts are not always born from the sense that memory is disappearing: they may, in fact, appear at the moment of its greatest turmoil. Secondly, it is not only the memory that crystallizes in these places, so does forgetfulness: to the places of memory we should add the places of amnesia. Thirdly, while the initial intention of these places is to remember, there may be other purposes
included in the meaning, such as denouncing the fact that the past has left open wounds that should be healed. In the fourth place, these artifacts of memory and forgetfulness do not always signify and symbolize the shared visions of a nation's past: quite the opposite, they may convey the struggles to appropriate the past. In this sense, the connection with the past may be a fragmented one. Museums and memorial sites play a key role in the creation and representation of the shared cultural heritage of different communities as they archive “cultural trauma”. It must be emphasized that the history of the places of memory is fundamental if we are to truly comprehend their meaning.

Memory also requires a narrative; it needs a ‘speech’ to be tangible, representable or sociable. For Young, “memorials provide the sites where groups of people gather to create a common past for themselves, places where they tell their constitutive narratives, their “shared stories of the past” (The Texture 7). Memorial museums are, in this sense, spaces ‘of’ and ‘in’ construction; they provide the physical environment and specific tools (e.g. guided tours, activities) for social interaction so that the construction of memory narratives can take place. This new model has been termed by Hooper Greenhill as an “interpretive model” that focuses on negotiations of meaning inside the Museum (364). Under this perspective that goes beyond the exhibition’s discursive analysis or the exclusive focus on exhibited objects heritage and museums are seen as “a mode of cultural production that has recourse to the past and produces something new in the present. The concept of performances allows expanding knowledge beyond the already well used criteria of the ‘never again’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘symbolic reparation’. The “never again” refers to the idea of avoiding human rights violations in the future through the education of the consequences of intolerance (Jelin 5).

Memorial museums contradict the traditional museum logic of being examples of glorious and admirable identities (Williams 102). Instead, they reveal the flaws and fissures of national histories and everything that history has tried to darken in order to highlight a one way progress development without genocides or bloodbath smears (Williams 160). Certainly, this makes them exceptional places for reflection and awareness about the past and the present but at the same time they become suitable places for controversies, debates and confrontations (Duffy 13). As memory forums, memorial museums are pierced by disagreements about what to represent, how to
exhibit, why, where, and to whom they belong (Huyssen *Twilight Memories* 99). These memory struggles also expose that a memorial museum is far from being the place of inclusion, diversity, and pluralism of perspectives. This should remind us that commemoration entails not only building, naming, or shaping physical sites. Commemoration as a practice also involves ritual acts in and occupations of public space as well as other kinds of performance and consumption that may leave no lasting trace on the landscape. James Young’s suggestion that deliberately encouraged multiple meanings and uses. This spawned an immense literature on the monument itself and a renewed interest in how monuments and other public practices of commemoration work in modern society. In this sense, the past and therefore memory is always a present construction, “the very ground on which, in which, with which we stand, move and otherwise interact; out of which we continually regenerate ourselves in relations with others” (Butler 938).

The process of constructing a memorial can facilitate necessary dialogues that can help to dampen entrenched social antagonisms and heal painful wounds of past. Some memorials may become sites for hosting reconciliation events, thereby reclaiming sites of trauma, for peace. While not unequivocally connected with the grievances of the past, this monument site depicts a symbol of symbolic justice that is meaningful to all minority groups. To summarize, it becomes clear that memorials and museums cannot be considered alone but are the result of spatial, historical, economic, social, and political forces which all contribute to their production. In the same manner that memory does not exist in isolation and is prompted by an image/images, token or a visit to a site of the past, memory space and the memory it conjures up, are the products of the society and the environment from whence they derive. In order to understand memory space more fully, it is necessary to appreciate the context that led to its production. A site plays a very significant role in the creation and maintenance of memory space: in the form of a “traumascape” which witnessed the past or the establishment of a museum as a symbolic repository of memory. As a result, museums and memorials are becoming intertwined so that museums begin to operate as memorials and vice versa. Such a memory space becomes a visceral, emotive experience attempting to ground itself in the local while still appealing to the global.