

Architectures of Memory: On the Materiality of the Process of Self-Affection

Abstract

The project takes further the reconsideration of mnemotechnics, beyond their reduction to techniques of rote memorisation, to being forms and techniques for the internalisation of discourse, oriented towards the transformative re-orientation of the subject in a determinate direction. It argues that this role of mnemotechnics is grounded within its approach towards memory as an impersonal mechanical retention and recall, exemplified in the phenomenon of learning by heart and being mindful of, which provides it a framework to work with an exteriority that is nonetheless internal to the subject. It is the strength of this framework that memory becomes the site of transformation understood as the internalisation of what is initially an exterior form of life, leading ultimately to the subjective reconstitution of the subject. The thesis demonstrates this through the uncovering of a mnemotechnical praxis of *smṛti* within the Indian traditions. The thesis seeks to foreground that the 'self' is not equated with 'consciousness' within these practices, which is to say, they do not conceptualise the locus of self-reflexivity as the self-presence of a conscious self, who is completely aware of its thoughts, feelings, and internal processes. Instead, the domain of self-presence is memory, which is both the site of forgetfulness and remembrance, non-consciousness and awareness. Apart from mnemotechnical practices, the study also examines the work of Augustine and Kaśmirian Śaivism (along with Dignāga-Dharmakīrti) in their conceptualisation of memory as the locus of an absolute ground that while transcending the subject forms its inner core, which is God and Śiva, respectively. It suggests that this imprint concerns the affective domain of the subject, conceptualised as a unity of knowledge, action, and will.