Editorial

The relevance of forgetting hits hard this year as we watch international stakeholders take their positions on Gaza. The Israeli disinformation campaign continues to keep citizens ideologically bound to a narrative that disavows how the Israeli state was created and developed an apartheid apparatus. Repeated across multiple conduits and at different levels of power, alternate truths efface the possibility of a historically-rooted knowing. On the other side is the unfailing voice of activism protesting the negation of Palestinians' right to challenge the occupation of their lands and the indiscriminate violence that has been inflicted on them for generations. The tussle between those willing the world to forget and those fiercely trying not to forget is severely amplified in times of conflict where ideology and official history both collude with the powerful.

History has been judgmental about forgetting. The discipline's traditional preoccupation with memory is embedded in a discourse of value. Only what is valued is remembered and what is forgotten must not have been worthy of remembering. Postmodern historians contested the positivist tradition to make room for those omitted in the annals of memory. Social and oral historians pertinently asked, 'Of value to whom?' and worked to mainstream the voice of the marginalised narrator. Even as they rethought official silences though, they still privileged memory in the accounts of their disenfranchised narrators. As Alessandro Portelli wrote, recounting is 'less about *events* than about their *meaning*.' Despite re-centering the forgotten, the understanding that forgetting something implies its lack of meaning to the subject persisted. And so, a key concern in this volume has been to rethink the pervasive connotations of forgetting and to consider if forgetting could be a site of productive/generative opportunity.

Recent movements for racial justice remind us that beyond the oppressive litany of absence, erasure, and omission, forgetting can be redemptive when used as a revisionist strategy. The Black Lives Matter movement's vandalism of Confederate statues was a clear statement that in order to address systemic racism in the present, it is imperative to publicly destroy monuments that valorise those who opposed the abolition. The gesture harked back to the fallen statues of Lenin and Hitler in post-communist Soviet states and Germany where protesters insisted that the glory of certain ideas ought to be forgotten.

To forget is to not remember (involuntarily) or to unremember (deliberately). The authors in this volume explore both connotations of forgetting in personal and collective spheres.

Ahmer Naqvi considers how watching team sports allows fans to forgo individual identities and politics, and be galvanised into an inter/national fan base. Governments have capitalised on the euphoria that comes with being part of this transitory collective identity, by sponsoring mega sports events to whitewash their crimes against their own people.

Sadaf Halai turns to literature to make sense of the interplay of remembering and forgetting when coping with the profound grief of losing a parent. She questions the felt arbitrariness of some memories versus others and the sheer survivalist impulse to let go of what is too harrowing to carry.

Farrukh Addnan makes us privy to the inspiration behind his abstract drawings. His meticulous mark-making is a response to the terrain of Southern Punjab where fond, familial associations of childhood sit amidst years of civilizational history in the neglected ruins of Tulamba.

Nazneen Engineer and Veera Rustomji discuss how the diminishing Parsi minority has distanced itself over time from its cherished rituals and traditions. Moving away from a very close-knit community life in South Asia has made it challenging for younger Parsis to relate to religious knowledge and regular practice, or even speak the language of their community.

Alyssa Sakina Mumtaz explains her practice as a rumination on the dichotomy between the corporeal desire to forget the inevitability of death and the injunctions in Islamic scriptures that advise remembering death at all times in order to be a more conscious, abiding Muslim.

In a milieu where breaking news still dominates our screens, Fahad Naveed's essay laments the waning significance of print media. He examines newspaper scraps used for packaging and selling street food in Karachi to query what kinds of stories have ceased to hold relevance and been relegated to such reuse.

Aamna Motala reflects on her teaching experiences through a Foucauldian lens. She considers the extent to which an instructor must commit to self-abnegation in order to enable student learning, but must equally invest in peer relationships that nurture them intellectually.

As we worked through these meditations on forgetting, we also felt its valence in the most mundane of ways—in the panic of almost missed deadlines, in the stress of forgoing commitments to attend to family, in the escapist levity of a student performance. I am grateful to have shared this journey with a fantastic editorial team, an ever-patient designer, Kiran Ahmad, thoughtful peer reviewers who offered insightful feedback, and all the wonderful authors.

Sumbul Khan
Editor, *Hybrid* 06 | Forgetting

Notes

1. Alessandro Portelli, "What makes Oral History different?" in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 67.