

## Retrograde Amnesia: A Critical Exploration of Memory, Identity and Trauma in Ruthinte Lokam

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### Abstract

Literature often serves as a rich field for comprehending human condition through the study of memory, trauma, and identity. The issue of memory loss in all its manifestations—from forgetfulness to the progressive deterioration of identity linked to diseases like Alzheimer's disease, retrograde amnesia thereby memory loss can be a potent instrument for investigating identity, reality, and the past. A complex view of how memory loss impacts social interactions and identity formation is clearly portrayed in Lajo Jose's *Ruthinte Lokam* (2019) which assumed to be formed the base for the movie *Bougainvillea*. The story explores the main character Ruth's battle with retrograde amnesia. Ruth Ronald has short-term memory loss and retrograde amnesia. She is unable to discriminate between reality and illusion. Voice recordings, notes, and a few fictional situations abound in her world. To get by in her daily life, she depends on her husband, Ronald Thomas, and her assistant, Ashwini. Another narrator is Ronald Thomas. The story begins when Ruth is confident she has spotted one of the neighborhood missing women of a certain age. The main focus of this novel is this inquiry and the disclosure of Ruth's and the missing girls' fates. This article critically examines the movie's use of retrograde amnesia as a means of examining trauma, memory, and identity.

**Keywords:** Memory, amnesia, neurocognitive disorder.

### Introduction

Memory is an essential part of who we are; it influences our relationships, perceptions, and self-concept. Memory impairment caused by neurocognitive illnesses affects people individually, in families, and across cultures. These ailments, which include Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and severe memory loss brought on by other cognitive disorders alters reality and one's history.

The way memory loss is portrayed in literature and movies not only raises significant philosophical and ethical questions about existence and identity, but it also provides profound insights into the actual experience of those affected.

Neurocognitive diseases are a group of conditions that impact cognitive functions as memory, reasoning, and problem-solving. The most famous is Alzheimer's disease, a degenerative condition that gradually deteriorates memory. They have trouble recognizing loved ones and doing everyday chores. Other forms of dementia, such as vascular dementia and Lewy body dementia, similarly affect memory abilities, albeit having different signs and stages.

Alzheimer's disease and dementia are two distinct but related conditions. Dementia encompasses a range of cognitive impairments that affect memory, reasoning, and daily functioning. Alzheimer's disease accounts for between 60 and 80 percent of dementia cases. While dementia can be caused by a variety of conditions, including vascular disease and Lewy body disease, Alzheimer's disease is characterized by a slow deterioration of brain cells caused by abnormal protein buildup.

Alzheimer's disease and dementia encompass a range of conditions that impact cognitive functions, including memory, reasoning, and problem-solving. Alzheimer's disease, the most prevalent kind, is a degenerative condition that gradually obliterates a person's memory, making it difficult for them to recognize loved ones and do daily duties. Other forms of dementia include vascular and Lewy dementia.

Memory loss in these circumstances is typically categorized as either retrograde amnesia, where memories of the past vanish, or anterograde amnesia, where new memories do not surface.

Disorientation, confusion, and irritation are common, and they can have a serious emotional impact on patients and caregivers. When a person's personal history is disjointed, these issues lead to challenging questions regarding identity. The disorder known as amnesia, especially retrograde amnesia, impairs a person's capacity to remember past experiences, memories, or events. Combining the terms "amnesia" and "retrograde," which both denote memory loss, denotes a particular type of memory impairment. Retrograde amnesia is an intriguing and complicated disorder that has attracted a lot of attention from the medical profession as well as from the general public. It frequently raises issues regarding identity, memory, and brain function. The definition of retrograde amnesia, its causes, symptoms, impact on individuals, and management or treatment options will all be covered in this essay.

Retrograde amnesia is a type of memory disorder where a person loses memories of events that occurred before a specific point in time, typically following a traumatic event such as a brain injury, stroke, or other forms of damage to the brain. Unlike other forms of memory loss, retrograde amnesia primarily impacts a person's recollection of past events rather than their ability to create new memories (which is known as anterograde memory).

Consider a person going through anything, such as a vehicle accident. They can have trouble recalling events that occurred soon prior to the collision, or they might have trouble recalling other memories from months or even years ago. Their recollection of their pre-incident lives may be disjointed, unclear, or nonexistent. They could still be able to recall the things they learnt after the encounter, though. Retrograde amnesia is especially fascinating because of this contrast, which emphasizes the intricacy of how our brains store and retrieve memories.

Retrograde amnesia can result from a number of factors, most commonly injury to particular brain regions involved in memory retrieval and storage. Among the most frequent reasons are Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Stroke, Brain Infections, Neurodegenerative Diseases, Psychological Trauma, Severe Alcoholism and Medications or Drug Use.

Indian author and screenwriter Lajo Jose is well-known for his contributions to Malayalam literature and film, especially in the mystery and criminal thriller genres. He began his career in the insurance industry as a regional manager at Max Life Insurance after being born in Kerala's Kottayam district. He switched to writing in 2015, concentrating on screenplays and eventually books. In May 2018, he released his first book, "Coffee House," which launched his lucrative literary career. Then came "Hydrangea," which became so successful that three editions were published in a single month. Both books feature a female detective and are part of the Esther Emmanuel series. "Roothinte Lokam" (2019), "Rest in Peace" (2020), "Kanya Maria" (2022), and "Orange Thottathile Athidhi" are examples of later works.

Apart from his literary accomplishments, Lajo Jose has also dabbled in screenwriting. He co-wrote the screenplay for the Amal Neerad-directed Malayalam movie "Bougainvillea," which starred Kunchacko Boban, Fahadh Faasil, and Jyothirmayi. This movie, which is scheduled for release in 2024, is his first screenplay in the motion picture business.

Roothinte Lokam by Lajo Jose explores the intricacies of memory, identity, and self-discovery in a gripping psychological crime thriller. Amidst an engrossing story, the novel centers on Ruth, a young lady who experiences retrograde amnesia after a horrific event. She is left to

navigate a world that feels both familiar and foreign when the amnesia robs her of her past. The narrative follows Ruth as she attempts to reassemble the pieces of her lost memories while facing the disturbing reality of who she is and the terrible circumstances that brought her to this point.

Roothinte Lokam is fundamentally a meditation on the limits of illusion and the brittleness of memory. The reader is led into a psychological labyrinth where truth and deceit converge as Ruth sets out to rediscover her past. Lajo Jose deftly examines broader topics of perception and the fallibility of human memory through Ruth's predicament. The novel's ability to depict the mental and emotional pain associated with memory loss is one of its strongest points. The reader is prompted to consider the nature of memory in general and if we can ever fully understand ourselves without our past by Ruth's battle to recover fragments of her existence.

Because of the author's incisive and vivid writing, Roothinte Lokam is not just an exciting story but also a perceptive examination of the human psyche. With each chapter revealing fresh facets of Ruth's past, the book moves at a rapid pace that keeps the reader interested and wondering what is genuine. The novel is made richer by the characters' depth of emotion, and it is an engaging and thought-provoking read because of the way Ruth's broken memories and her continuous quest to understand her life and its riddles interact. What distinguishes Roothinte Lokam as a noteworthy work of literature is Lajo Jose's ability to combine psychological depth with a crime thriller.

To sum up, Roothinte Lokam is a complex and intense piece of literature that questions our conceptions of identity, memory, and reality. In addition to telling a gripping criminal story, Lajo Jose asks readers to consider the frailty of memory and how it influences who we are through Ruth's path of self-discovery. It demonstrates the depth of the human experience and the potency of storytelling.

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