

**ENHANCEMENT OF MEMORY THROUGH NARRATIVE RETROSPECTION WITH  
REFERENCE TO DEEPAK UNNIKRISHNAN'S *TEMPORARY PEOPLE***

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**Abstract**

Remembrance is the attribute of human beings. Memory Studies can relate itself to the retrospective realm. Deepak unnikrishnan's *Temporary People* is the picturisation of the life of the guest workers in the gulf countries. Only a few memories of good incidents are shown here, more harsh realities are portrayed. A part of the dystopian narrative is nostalgic as well since all the characters are waiting to go home and living in those memories. These bitter memories are part of their psyche and situation.

Memory studies is an emerging genre in Cultural Studies. Preservation of memory is an inherent trait in human beings. People cherish good memories, but that does not mean that they can easily dump unwanted memories. History is the best evidence for preserved memories. There is a paradigm shift from historical knowledge to how we remember. The manner in which how people remember what they remember is relevant. In that sense forgetting is also part of remembrance. Identities can be extracted from the memories that are coming out from people.

Memory plays a pivotal role in the process of creating meaning to people and society and thereby culture in general. The manner in which a person remembers is dependant and the material that he remembers is largely based on the culture of that particular individual. During the process some experiences are subverted for the sake of others. In that sense memory is hegemonic. Regimes of memory are shaped as a few past experiences being remembered often, some others less remembered and another set which are totally forgotten.

It is retrospection that enables memory to be preserved. Only humans have this story telling ability. Only with nostalgia, diasporic communities could establish their marginalised plight. Memory is experiential and when written by an author, it may loose a lot of meanings and gain different meanings as well. So the narrative make the particular experience authentic or diverted memory.

Deepak Unnikrishnan's *Temporary People* portrays a series of characters residing in the Gulf countries who resonate gloom as they perform menial labour and cope with second class citizenship. Although they make eighty percent of the total population there, they are temporary people. What makes the work different from other expatriate literatures is that the least privileged class of people, the guest workers are addressed here.

Flashback and foreshadowing are the two main variants of anachrony in a narrative. To Genette, these terms are analepsis and prolepsis respectively. Homodiegetic analepses show analepsis about the same character or event which was there at that time in the text and heterodiegetic about different character, storyline or event in the text.

When the third roommate, privy and vital to the master plan, ran away the next morning with the new suitcase and passport, he made it past the guard on night duty, onto the morning bus to the airport, past the bored ticket agent at check-in, past security, past pat down and a rummage through his suitcase, past using the bathroom once, twice, thrice, to pee, to shit, to sit, past Duty Free, where he stared at chocolates and booze and magaziens and currencies, past families eating fast food in track suits or designer wear, past men and women sleeping on the floor, past his past, past his present, past the gold in the souks, the cranes in the sky, petrol in the air....(Unnikrishnan 5)

In the narrative world, we have the option to jump backwards and forward and then come back to the present. If we could associate the narratives now to the real present time, the novel as a whole has connection to the contemporary world. The four aspects involved are reading time, the moment, the contemporary novel and the contemporary world. Analepsis is more common in narratives than prolepsis. Interaction between temporality of the narrative and reader takes place, only when the

reader is competent to know the state of affairs. Retrospection, memory and archiving of past events are embedded in the narrative theory. Protensions are mind's travels into the future, not reality. Difference exists in actual time and experience of time. Whenever time moves back or forth, it is connected to anachronist temporal structure of the narrative. "I once knew a man who wanted to die," said Iqbal. "He'd realized pretty early it was hard to die in the workplace or in the camps. He wasn't unhappy. He just wanted to die" (16).

The alienation of the foreign labourers, the workers who are significant to the growth of cities, but are not given citizenship and so are temporary people. It can be found that each story is varied. Some have a dystopian element, some a poetic feel, while others have magical realism.

Analepses and prolepses satisfy the notion of time in human mind, where time is experienced as subordinated, and the cosmological to the phenomenological. A narrative presents case study of internal time consciousness. The realist genre can be considered superior in the sense that it presents a recognisable physical reality. "The importance of tense to narratology is that it offers a framework for the analysis of temporal structure and temporal reference in narrative which will go beyond the idea of time as thematic content" (Currie 150). Tense based theory of narrative satisfies narrative consciousness of readers. It analyses the relationship between time and narrative.

In a story one of the young men wanted to go home to meet his dying father, but he is not getting the visa. No matter how hard one works, one will not get visa very fast, however urgent is the situation.

Anna knew Hamdan as intimately as her body. In the seventies, when she first arrived, the buildings were smaller. Nevertheless, she would, could, and did glue plus tape score of men a day, correcting and reattaching limbs, putting back organs or eyeballs- and sometimes, if the case was hopeless, praying until the man breathed his last. (9)

In a narrative, recollection of the past is significant as a recovery of the past. "Then there were those who would never be found. A combination of factors contributed to this: bad luck, ineptitude, a heavy workload." (11) Retrospective measure is used as a means of building the gap in the present. These passages are different in attitudes, values and vocabulary as different from that of the present situation.

What UAE is today is the consequence of the effort of thousands of labourers who are still struggling for survival which makes it a political manifesto. How the temporary nature of residence affects the mind, families and memories of people is elegantly portrayed here. The ephemeral quality of the temporary is emphasised here. Before the last brick is laid the labourers disappear slowly. Through magic realism and surrealism Deepak Unnikrishnan successfully portrayed the memories of the expatriates in UAE.

### Works Cited

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