

**Analyzing and Explaining the Process of Nostalgia in Nima Youshij's Letters**

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**Abstract:** The present article is a research about nostalgia in the Nima Youshij's letters. Since the Nima's letters are regarded as the valid documents of his life, their analysis makes the aspects of his life and poems clear. This issue has been studied as one of the psychological and unconscious behaviors of the human in the collection of Nima's letters. In the contemporary literature, nostalgia, seems to be unavoidable, due to the social frustrations, and has much more manifestations in the works of such poets as Akhavan, Forogh, and especially Nima. In this article, after defining the nostalgia, its creating factors, are going to be explained by the psychologists including regrets over the past, sorrow caused by the loss of family members, recalling the memories of the childhood and adolescence, suffering from the pain and hardship of travel and migration, and the sorrow of getting old and recalling the death, and then the Nima's letters, which form the significant part of his written works, different evidences are going to be stated for each issue..

[AHMAD HOSSEINI MAKAREM. **Analyzing and Explaining the Process of Nostalgia in Nima Youshij's Letters.** *Life Sci J* 2012;9(3):1834-1839] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 266

**Keywords:** Nima Youshij, the letters, Nostalgia, homesickness

**1. Introduction**

Nostalgia is in fact a psychological term that has been entered the field of literature, first in the contemporary era. This issue is emerged in the existence of the poet or the writer as one of the human's psychological behaviors that exists in the unconscious, and has been as the source for creating many of the valuable literal works around the world; because nostalgia is the general, instinctive, and natural emotion of the human's existence, which has been crystallized in the poet or the writer, in the expression and definition of nostalgia, it is written that it is a kind of homesickness, which is caused by being away from homeland, so as whenever the person pays attention to the past in his mind, or becomes depressed by reviewing his past, and feels somehow regretful on his past, he can be stated to be influenced by nostalgia, which is interpreted as the homesickness in Persian, today. The main factors of creating nostalgia in different people can be the following issues: regret over the past, and complain of the status quo, losing one of the family members, recalling the childhood and adolescence memories, feeling homesickness due to travelling, and its hardships and pains, the sorrow of getting old, and its hardships, wishing for the utopia, and etc. In the contemporary literature, nostalgia, is indicative in the two types of individual and social, the individual type of which can be divided into two instantaneous and continuous type, regarding time. In the individual and instantaneous nostalgia, the poet or the writer indicate a moment from the past moments in his poem or writing, but in the continuous individual nostalgia, the homesickness is clear in all his works

from the beginning to the end, and since the social frustrations in the contemporary era, is one of the basic factors of creating this individual-collective emotion, therefore, nostalgia can be felt and observed in the contemporary literature. This issue, exists in the poems of such poets as Nima Youshij, Forogh Farokhzad, Akhavan Sales, and etc. for example, Nima believes that: I'm the one who is away from my homeland, like a bird from the nest/ like my age, my today has been forgotten (Karimi-Hakkak Ahmad, Kamran Talattof.2004). Or Forogh says: "those days have gone/those good days/those overfilled days/ those heavens, full of spangles (Ghanoonparvar M. R. 2009). Or Akhavan Sales who say: "it's been said that "hope, and despair!" don't know/ I'm the elegy speaker of my dead homeland. In this article, the author has tried to explain the concept of nostalgia generally, and this issue in Nima's letter specifically, so that, to analyze the creating factor of this emotion would be analyzed in Nima's existence, and present some evidences for better understanding of his poems from this regard.

**1.1. The Meaning of Nostalgia**

This term has been created by combining the two words with the Greek base *nostos*, which meaning coming back home, and *algia*, which means pain and suffer. In fact, this term is an expression in the psychological field, and in fact, is a mental and unconscious treatment, which takes place as the result of returning the human's mind to the past. Some believe that nostalgia is a form of homesickness, which is the product of being away from the homeland. While some other, know it as a combination of "returning and pain." In fact, nostalgia

is a natural, instinctive, and a general feeling that exists mostly among all the races and tribes, which is strengthened and indicated, when the individual separates from his past, and remembers his past time, and is regretful. When the past is full of beauty, happiness, and power for the person, this feeling even gets stronger. The past which is lost and is not returnable. During his life, when the poet or the writer faces with some problem or loses one of his dear members, or when he is affected by a disease, or when the snow of old age sits on his head, he is looking for a remedy, naturally, but when there is no postern for him, he gets a nostalgia, and he wishes the glorious time, that would never be achieved by him, and it is the exact concept we are looking for. Based on this description, nostalgia can be defined as: "the emotional tension and sadness due to being away from the homeland, and the homeland's pain, is the pain that is produced because of the desire to meet the homeland; the regrets of the past, and homesickness" (Jameson, Fredric. (1989)). "Homesickness, and the desire to return home (Pour Afkari, 1994: 1011), wishing for something, that has been recalled from the past, homesickness due to being away from the homeland, or the homesickness resulted from beautiful and sweet past times" It should be stated that, this term, has been translated as "homesickness, and the past regrets" in Persian (Jameson, Fredric. (1989)). Therefore, in this type of feeling, the poet or the writer, remembers a beautiful, sweet, and shining past and depicts it painfully and regretfully with his own pen.

### 2.1. Nostalgia in Nima's Letters

Since, the people around the world suffer from the emotional disturbances from the environment and the time due to the machinery life, and its consequences, nowadays, nostalgia appears his face much more. Being away from purities, good ethics, and in one word, being away from human dignity in the today's world, is the factor, which wins the writer or the poet's attention to his own glorious past times to review in the world of imagination, the happy past time, and travels to the spaces or other times, and rebuilds and revives his honorable past times.

### 3.1. Nostalgia (Homesickness)

One of the main reasons that cause the sense of nostalgia to be created by the poet or the writer is the homesickness. Homesickness and the sorrow caused by it, has an extensive reflection on the different era's literature including mystic literature. In the classical mystic literature, poems are found abundantly, the content of which are the human's wishes in reaching the main position. In "Ney Nameh [Song of the Reed]," Rumi says: everyone who was away from his origin/ seeks his connection times

again (Karimi-Hakkak Ahmad, Kamran Talattof. 2004). Moreover, he says in his lyrics:

*I'm the bird of Heavenly garden; I'm not from the earth*

*I've been kept in the cage of my body, for some days  
Blessed is the day, when I fly toward the friend  
Fly for the love of his place (Rumi, 1990: 201).*

Or Hafez, who says:

*The veil on the soul's face becomes the mist of my body*

*Blessed is the moment, when I throw the veil from the face*

*Such a cage is not the punishment of such a tuneful man*

*I'll go to the Rizvan rose-bed, since I'm the bird of that sward*

However, in the contemporary era, the nostalgia or homesickness is indicative in another way in the poets' works. In 1993, when Akhavan came from Tous to Tehran, described the hardships of travel and his homesickness and living in Tehran as the following:

*Since I'm separated from my fellows and home  
You're right if you say I'm in the predicament  
In the Heaven, like a thirsty traveler*

I've fallen on the melting origin land.

Or in the poem "Complain from Rey", in which he complains the exile, and knows himself a youngster, the nostalgia has placed him in a bad predicament:

*Who am I? A strange of youth  
I was born with a predicament  
At an angle in Tehran*

*I've fallen into a predicament (ibid., 129)  
Furthermore, Nima has composed in this way:*

*From the two township bread  
Painful memory of the mountain  
That unfortunately in your city*

*I got old, and I'm suffering  
My house, my jungle, where they are, where?  
They're now miles away from me*

*See, what the doom fate is doing with me?  
It keeps me away from my homeland... (Nima  
Youshij, 1997).*

Since Nima, the poet, was born in the green nature of the north, this feeling gets stronger in him. Nima remembers his homeland, in each and every place of his own letters. In a letter to his father, on 26<sup>th</sup>, February, 1925, Nima describes his love and interest in visiting the homeland in this way:

*The wild bird, which flies are your son who  
knows the hunter very well. I scope, I will not  
take the refuge to nowhere, but the homeland.*

*Everything is my favorite there. When it will possible to have all your favorite things? When we will gather in one place? One tree shadow on us?. Just us, and our country and our villager friend (Youshij, 1997).*

Nima cannot tolerate to be far from his homeland, and knows the city as a big prison for him, and says:

*When I see the birds, jumping over the branches, when it is raining, and the Alborz peak is covered with snow and ice, I remember my own mountain." Nima wishes: "I wish I were a bird, and could move freely! I wish I were a cloud, I could travel in the infinite space! ...I'm indeed like a desert bird, who is depressed as a result of being far from my own mountain (Youshij, 1997).*

Nima claims that:

*My homeland was the best place where I grew up with my brother and sister! The quiet mountainous village from where I'm far, unfortunately, and I'm still alive! Therefore, how I can have fun? I sigh in the remembrance of the night of living in my homeland, continuously" (Nima Youshij, 1971: 36). In a letter to one of his friends, on January 30th, 1929, with regrets Nima advertises "his excessive wish about the beautiful sceneries of the homeland"*

*(Youshij, 1997)*

In another letter, he writes: "No one understands my feeling, what I'm talking about, and what is affecting my thought? Overall, I have fun; however, I cannot reject that I grieve of the regretful reflection of the past, especially about my homeland" (Youshij, 1997). In a letter, to his brother, Ladbun, Nima describes the peak of his sorrow as the following: "my dear brother, I went, and maybe you don't see me again, and I farewell all my wishes and hopes. .... Be kind to my little sister, instead of me. When she grew up, tell about me to her, and tell her that I always had sorrow" (Nima Youshij, 1975: 24).

In another letter titled "my student" Nima says:

*What reason should we give, not to love the place where we grew up and had fun? This place is the homeland, unless some events had made us hate this place. This patriotism feeling is very high in me. I'm habited to it. Habit is the rule of life. If it were not, living would have an absolutely bitter and frowned face (Youshij, 1997).*

Nima loves his homeland so much, that he says:

*Of course, you know that. I'm not against these urban guests who have come here. However, I like every little stone of my dear homeland, the value of which is still unknown to my people and*

*father, and I don't like putting it at the service of strangers (Youshij, 1997).*

Generally, Nima has the following feeling of nostalgia:

*"My dear sister, I go to sleep, I burn, I wake up, I cannot stand, my homeless heart is really into flying to the homeland" (ibid. 63).*

#### 4.1. Nostalgia as a Result of Social Frustration and Failures

Nima is the poet, who pays attention to the society and the human's issues. In his idea "the human and his will is standing at the height of the history, and has made it; therefore, he is always the message of freedom" (Akbar Beyragh, 2002: 96). Moreover, it can be stated that he is a political poet, and he uses symbolism to state these issues. Anyway, Nima, "is a self-centered man who has searched in the horizon of objects, and sometimes, he shows such a strong sensitivity to the social issues, that introduces himself more sociable in comparison with the other contemporary poets, without entering any harm to the depth of his poem" (Barahani, 1995: 674). Therefore, it can be stated that Nima is a poet who knows the pain and suffering very well, and he is hurt by the society, he is homeless, and has an absolutely bitter life. He says about his burning heart and tearful eyes:

*The poor condition of life hurts me as well, I wish I could see the spring like them, happily. However, my heart is like a flame, that as much as I get busier, burns me much more!. My eyes are like a piece of cloud, that have never got tired of rain... I think it's the sky, which is crying.the flower have become as red as the color of my hearts. The winds are groaning, and the violet, which has nodded her head, is as sad as me (Youshij, 1997).*

In a letter to his brother Ladbun, on October (Pisces), 17<sup>th</sup>, 1924, describes his separation from him, as the darkness of disturbed dawns, and says:

*Among the definitions of this riddle, one is your homelessness, and the other is my separation, and you are ragging like the storm, and I get disturbed like the darkness of the dawn .... I'll never forget you at the oment of travel. The last look of your farewell in that burning cold weather in the winter, from that black chariot, is still shaking me (ibid. 104).*

Passing the time is not his favorite. He says: "I pass the time like the star under the cloud. The time is passing but not in the way we like" (ibid. 117).

Nima's life is so hard and bitter, that he rejects telling that to his sister; because, she is not able to feel it at all.

*I've just woken up with the flank pain... Tonight I'll walk alone in a dark passage with a walking stick. I'll count the stars over my head. My life is very bitter. I won't explain it. You'll not able to imagine it at all (ibid. 461).*

### 5.1. The Nostalgia of Recalling the Childhood

Recalling the childhood and adolescence is among the issues that arises the poets' emotions and feelings at an older age, continuously, and sometimes even brings tears to their eyes, because recalling those memories, creates a kind of enjoyment in the writer or the poet, and then results into homesickness, or nostalgia, and this feeling seems more resistable. In a letter on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1930, Nima writes to one of his friends: "just recalling the past, attacks sometimes to my heart. I feel sad of passing the time and the death of creatures" (Youshij, 1997). On September (Virgo) 15<sup>th</sup>, 1923, in a letter to his sister, Nikta, Nima writes:

*These days, I walked in the quiet corners of the city so much, that I'm getting crazy... what stories the owls have, that are moving and flying inside the city, and whenever I hear their voices, stop working. These little things even, have transferred my memories of the happy times of my childhood and the mountain. They arise a little buzz in my heart (Nima Youshij, 1979).*

Nima describes the happy past time when he was playing next to his mother and sister, in this way:

*It's the happy sound of the past, which is not returnable. It's the sound of the memories that has poured the wishes and the regrets to the mouth of flowers and narrates them with the hearts that shake well. In the place, where you are alone, our mother fostered us. She weaved baskets with desert grass here. And made bunches of flowers, and we played together. We sit under the trees and threw our kind hearts in front of those flowers. With this broken hearts I'm very similar to the wreckage, narrating the bloody events (Nima Youshij, "A", 1971: 17-18).*

Nima describes his regrets about losing the happy time of his youth as the following:

*Unfortunately, I passed the first part of my youth without considering this issue. Now, I'm recalling bitterly, in the mountains and caves of the remote homeland of mine, and blame myself: what made me waste some part of my nonreturnable youth, and add to the regrets the nature has provided for me certainly.*

Yet, in another place, he says:

*"If I started my youth again, I would learn the order of agriculture science, or in one of the centers, I would study industry, or medication, to be a doctor" (Youshij, 1997).*

### 6.1. The Nostalgia of losing dears

Nima is highly affected by the death of those he loves. In such a space, Nima's poem is a burning elegy, indicating the inside hot mark, which erupts like a volcano. In this mood, the sorrow and grief is clear from every word of his poems including Nima's elegy are the poems that he has composed in his father's separation. In the poem, "my father" he describes a tragic space (Nima Youshij, 2007: 348). In the father's loss, he knows himself released in grief and sorrow. This poem shows the sorrow and grief governing on Nima's heart like a mirror.

*Similar to you, who went, he went soon  
And left me in his sorrow  
He covered himself and traveled lightly  
To destroy me by his sorrow (ibid. 351).*

In the sorrow of losing his father, during a letter to his brother Ladbun, on June, 16<sup>th</sup>, 1926, he writes:

*Where should I start from Ladbun, how can I collect the homesicknesses? I do not know the way to do it. I woke up one night near the dawn, the window shook me heavily. I asked why you don't leave this poor poet alone. On the stairs, a familiar voice called me. I ran out of the room hastily. Alas! It was just imagination. Ladbun, where can imagination take the place of him? How the father will return? If the flame of one torch turned off, what would be the remedy? Ladbun, father has been somebody. You have to be a father some some people. Your orphan brother and friend: Nima (Youshij, 1997: 146).*

In a letter, on June, 15<sup>th</sup>, 1926, Nima shows his appreciation to his father's love, under the title of "kind and honorable governor, Mr. Nezam Aldoleh,":

*I've heard that the kind and honorable governor had held the obit for my father three days in Rasht. The poet does not know how, when, and in what language he should reply this sympathy and compassion. What language? Poetry, music, and each and every kind of figures and special materials are unable to reveal the latent human's conscious ... here I finish the paper, with inability, and I won't talk about the uselessness of supplication against fate (ibid. 145).*

Nima expresses his grief and sorrow with his friend about the loss of his father as the following:

*I say hello to you, who think about a painful poet. The father's sorrow is a new hole that is*

*added to the wreckage of this dam. To tell you the truth, I have no fun. I'm hungry, I'm a captive, and I'm trying hard for captive and hungry people. The old who wins over hatred is not called the winner, the winner is the one, who attacks to destroy his existence. The death attacks are only irresistible (ibid., 149)*

In another letter to his sister Nakta, he describes his tears in losing his father as a cloud whose job is raining.

*Do you want to know what I do? The dam that was built in front of the tears, is broken again. I do not know here this flood is rolling me? I'm the cloud. Look, Nakta., you cry instead of me in the grass of "Taliv," when the sun sets, but an eternal sunset!!! (ibid: 150-151) also (Ref. ibid., 148, 160, 234, 263, 299).*

### 7.1. Nostalgia Resulted from Weakness, and Senescence

During a letter on January 12<sup>nd</sup>, 1929, he writes to Parviz Natel Khanlari:

*I'm counting the number of my past times. When I review the disappeared events one by one, my head starts shaking from the serious accidents. I think I'm getting too old, and it seems that every little insidious thing created, is going to steal something from the inside of me. The heart desires are just excuses in this regard! (ibid. 213).*

In another letter to Khanlari, he knows the thoughts and the tastes as the remedies for each stage of the age, and says:

*When you reach my age, and waste some part of your age like me with useless thought, you will write the same thing, and will induce that in each stage of your life, we suffer from one kind of disease. The thoughts, opinions, and tastes are the treatments that are given for that special disease (ibid. 270)*

Nima believes that what is giving encouragement and power in his elderly is the nature of the mountain, which exists in him. He says: "I've lost youth, and I'm living in the old age. The only thing that induces me, I'm still young is the mountainous nature that can be interpreted as the wickedness and cordiality of the scamps of my homeland" (ibid. 279). Therefore, he believes that going to Yoush, his own village is very useful for him to rest and get ready for work. "In fact, I'm a little weak. I'd like to go to Yoush for one or two months, and live in there. The nature gives me more success, and I should get ready for work, since I've been refreshed" (ibid. 213).

Nima laments the past, he feels homesick, and believes that its compensation is nothing except action.

*Whenever, I remember the past, I lament in all respects. I think, I've lost some part of my age, and I was not really useful for my people and myself. Now against the age that has been passed, I cannot give any compensation except action (ibid. 316).*

Yet, in another place, he says:

*But I have to be really sorry, by looking at my white hair, each of which is regarded as the death's courier, and give me the message of returning. Through counting the days lost of my age, most of which as I see has gone, and the little part has been left, and I have not done with enthusiasm and what I had to do, I feel homesick. What have I done? Nearly nothing (ibid. 344).*

At this moment Nima feels defeated and dead of everything, and he has turned into a statue of sorrow and grief: "everything smells bone and shroud. Everything recalls defeat and death"(ibid., 472). "I'm really rebuffed. I was the one who was the cause of happiness in every gathering, but today, I'm the statue of sorrow and grief" (Ibid. 483).

In a letter, on June, 1953, he writes to Jalal Al Ahmad:

*However, I've become really old. The situation of the stars in this month proves it. As much as I try to read all the lines of your letter, I cannot. When I wear my glasses, they fall down from my eyes to the ground similar to a false crystal bowl; it seems that they are making faces for me. They tell me now write if you can (ibid. 505).*

Yet, in another letter, addressing Naghash Bashi, Nima believes that old age is the reason of absent-mindedness, and impatience, and says:

*As soon as one got old, absent-mindedness and impatience come to visit him. Moreover, I've got more impatient and gloomy. I complete all my properties daily. Anyway, it is very painful, to keep waiting to listen to the bell of the caravan, and I do not like to be asked about the reason, because as much as I'm thinking about the deliverance way for myself, I suffer (ibid., 532)*

### 8.1. The Nostalgia of Staying away from the Lover

Nima's romantic letters to his wife, in addition to stating his viewpoints about the poet, are full of expressing love, friendship, and moreover, it's full of beautiful idioms and expressions. In a letter, Nima writes to Alieh:

*I've always past the flowers like disturbed breezes. I've not had any power to make them shake. I've been shining at nights like the moonlight on them. I didn't want their beauties to be hidden. Which of these flowers can shelter a weird bird on their laps? I put my nest (my*

*heart) on its hand! When can it split the dark clouds, remove the darknesses, and save the most inconvenient hearts? Alieh! You! You can. How much I love your self-esteem and popularity. The lovable beautiful flower of mine (Nima Youshij, "B," 1971: 17).*

Yet, in another letter, to Alieh, Nima has suggested studying the history and reading the poems of great poets, so that she believes that the human's heart is the origin of everything, and only poets are able to spend sensitivity. He suggests Alieh: "shake hand with the hand, which keeps your hand. Put your foot where it won't shake under your foot." Nima believes that although the waves are very beautiful and graceful, in the moon and sunrise, nobody trusts in them. Although the strong mountain seems rough, all the flowers are placed on them. Therefore, by stating these beautiful metaphors to Alieh, who is like a flower for him, he knows the poet as a creature, whose wonders are not understood by the others, and treats the people's descriptions about the poets, as just a spiritual proximity. In this writing, he is disturbed and he is uncertain, if he is able to continue his life or not. He says that he is the patient because of his beloved, and recommends him: "Alieh, Alieh, I'm tired of everything. The only thing that can save me is your beauty. Please be kind with your patient" (ibid. 33). In another letter, to Alieh, Nima writes: "separation is sweet! It decreases enmity, and increases the friendship. Moreover, it calms the disturbed heart. So let me cry since I have nobody and my hope is interrupted, and sleep in the tears" (Youshij, 1997). According to Nima, two things are unforgettable. He says: "I do not know how to mislead, and I cannot close the wing of my imagination.... everything is forgotten here, except the attractive memories of the past and the beloved, who is far from the person" (ibid. 190). In a part of his speech in the first congress of the Iranian writers on July, 1946, Nima says: "the result of my investigation, after getting separated from the school, and passing the romantic times, ends to where it is possible to be seen in the poem of "Afsaneh, [Legend]" (Nima Youshij, 1978), and according to Aryan Pour's words:

*The poet seeks the corner of his heart in this youth era (Afsaneh poem). And retells the narration of his love and failures, describes his life's pessimism and hardships. Moreover, he states his understanding about the instability, fleeting of life, colors, lusts, and wishes deceptions, and wherever he finds a chance, he imagines some beautiful scenes and*

*perspectives of the past and youth times (Aryan Pour, 2003: 590)*

## 2. Discussions

Nostalgia is in fact psychological terms that is synonymous with the regret, and indicates the person's tendency to the past times, in whose ideas, are very bright and outstanding. Nostalgia means the homesickness, and regret to the past times. In the contemporary era, this term entered the field of literature due to the frequency and severity of the social frustrations, and manifested in the poems of the contemporary poets such as Nima. Nima, who has the title of the Persian She'r-e-No' father, is in general a sad, pessimistic, and reserved, and the nostalgic concepts are clear in his poems. He says: "my main source is my suffering. I compose poems for me and the others (Nima Youshij, 1979) these writings are usually memorable, and pathetic. Therefore, "silence, darkness, boredom, and loneliness..." are felt in every part of his poems and writings. In order to relax himself, writes continuously, and recalls the bright and sweet past times such as his childhood and adolescence in his writings, and he wishes permanently to return to the pristine and beautiful nature of Yoush, where is his homeland and birthplace, on which he emphasizes.

## Acknowledgements:

Author is grateful to Department of General Courses, Kashan Technical College (shahid Rajaei) for financial support to carry out this work.

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