



زانكۆی سه‌لاحه‌دین – هه‌ولێر  
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## " Nostalgia in selected poems of Seamus Heaney"

A Graduation Research Project

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## Abstract

Nostalgia is a psychological situation that people might be associated with but not able to explain it .Nostalgia is a feeling of longing or affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy memories or associations. This essay examines Nostalgia in literature especially in poems of one of the modern poets . Positive nostalgia brings a sense of happiness, comfort,and connection to our past, while negative nostalgia can bring up painful or traumatic memories. Heaney was a poet of great significance in our modern times. His poems were a reflection of his life, and he dedicated parts of them to the longing for days gone by because of his own personal experiences .The objective of my research is to demonstrate the portrayal of nostalgia in the poetry of This Poet.

## Section one

### *1.1 Nostalgia*

Nostalgia is a feeling of longing or yearning for a place or home that one has left behind, often accompanied by a sense of sadness or heartache. That can include homesickness for a childhood home, or a longing for a place where one felt a sense of belonging or comfort. Nostalgia can also be related to a specific period of time or experience, such as a past relationship or an event .(Arlin Cunic,2022).

generally,nostalgia could be a complex and multifaceted feeling that can be activated by a assortment of variables and can bring out both positive and negative assumption .The word Nostalgia is a combination of greek words "nostos" which means Home and "Algos " meaning sorrows and griefs in such manner the literal meaning of nostalgia is the desire to return home or the pain that was the cause being away from home.The word was coined by Jonathan Hofer who was a medical student in Switzerland, Hofer noticed that those people who are living far from home, such as soldiers or those sent abroad in domestic service experience a psychological difficulty that caused them to die,Hofer named that phenomenon nostalgia.(The British Psychological Society,2008).

## *1.2 Literature and nostalgia*

The literary acts are ineluctably Niklas Salmose and Eric Sandberg utilize the cliché of opening lines 'Once upon a time' as the title of their collection on nostalgia in literature, Eric sandberg also notes that naturally is a nostalgic form of art and it is regularly retrospective. Moreover, states that nostalgia usually inspired by a particular emotional intensity. In almost all the culture the most famous and repeated involve tales of past heroic deeds. In the novel *The sea* by John Banville 'the past beats inside max mordenlike a second heart'. the nostalgic urge is driven in to literature because of the unstopability of the past. (Sam Caleb, Niall Ó Cuileagáin, 2020).

The late Svetlana Byom's work on nostalgia had a noticeable impact on scholarly reappraisals of the subject, According to Svetlana Byom In the future of nostalgia, "nostalgia is a yearning for a home that neither exists nor ever did," .(Sveltana Byom, 2001).

since nostalgia is derived from "nostos-return home and algia-longing" to remember something nostalgically is not to recall the past as how exactly was but to distort and twist the reality and what has happened since then. Nostalgia leaves a double exposure, past and present, the place where one's soul belongs to and where he is actually located physically. In the literature of romantic period in France ,Nostalgia takes various meanings in different works, In the works of Benjamin Baudelaire nostalgia means yearning for unknown places and things that they no longer belong to you, Also for Hugo nostalgia means the pain of exile. Nostalgia has a fundamental place in social-political and romantic poetry in the works of Yushij and Muti hijazi. (Nasser Ghasemi Rozveh, 2017).

## Section Two

### *2.1 Nostalgia place and time*

nostalgia is the feeling of longing for the past usually for a particular place or a specific period of time. Remembering of that specific place or time is kept in the imagination of each person. These imaginations create a narrative that first broadens place attachments to other society members, and potentially produce shared myths of places. It is arguable that strong place attachments are the fundament of place-based narratives, but these narratives are also nostalgic. Mongolian Kazakh population is used as an example of study of how strong place attachments develop into place-based narratives of home and identity for diasporic societies over time. (Barcus, Shugatai, 2023, p.104).

One of the forms of personal nostalgia going back in time and remembering the memories of childhood, each of us feels a sort of sorrow when remembering our childhood as Nima Yushij The Father of Modern Persian Poetry in his book "poems and childhood" states that those days are the most poetic days of one's life also to the poet's heart. Homesickness is another type of nostalgia which is called personal homesickness when people are far from their home for any reason and this kind of nostalgia can be reflected in the poetry of Qeysar when he remembers his home and his country with sorrow. In one of the Yushij's nostalgic poem "In Memory Of My Motherland" The poet nostalgically talks about the pain of living in the city and him feeling heartache for being away from his homeland to mount Farakesh. In the poetry of Yushij and Hijazi city is a symbol of alienation and confusion on the other hand nature is the symbol of homeland and peace because both of those poets were migrated. (Nasser Ghasemi Rozveh, 2017, p.535)

## ***2.2 Types of nostalgia***

Nostalgia is simply characterized as a yearning or desire to return to a particular period of time or place. Nostalgia could be a "A memory of happiness," as it is usually related to happy memories from the past. It can be a source of comfort in times of sadness or depression. However, nostalgia is not as it were around cheerful recollections.

### ***There are two essential types of nostalgia:***

**positive nostalgia** ;Positive nostalgia is a feeling of longing or fondness for past memories that brings joy and happiness. It is a sentimental reminiscence that creates a sense of warmth and comfort. This type of nostalgia brings a positive effect on mental health and well-being, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Positive nostalgia helps us to appreciate and value our experiences which gives us a sense of belonging and connection to our past. Overall, positive nostalgia is a powerful feeling that brings happiness and joy in the present.

**Negative Nostalgia;**Negative nostalgia refers to a sentimentality for a past time or place, but with a negative or painful aspect. It can involve remembering a difficult or unpleasant experience, such as a traumatic event, or it can be associated with a time or place where one experienced significant hardships or struggles. Negative nostalgia can be triggered by various factors, such as revisiting a place that holds painful memories, or encountering a person who was present during a difficult time. It can be challenging to deal with negative nostalgia as it can bring up uncomfortable feelings and memories, leading to distress and emotional pain.(Arlin Cunic,2022)

## Section Three

### *3.1 Nostalgia in the poems of Seamus Heaney*

#### *Death of a Naturalist*

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart  
 Of the townland; green and heavy headed  
 Flax had rotted there, weighted down by huge sods.  
 Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun.  
 Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles  
 Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell.  
 There were dragonflies, spotted butterflies,  
 But best of all was the warm thick slobber  
 Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water  
 In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring  
 I would fill jampotfuls of the jellied  
 Specks to range on window sills at home,  
 On shelves at school, and wait and watch until  
 The fattening dots burst, into nimble  
 Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how  
 The daddy frog was called a bullfrog  
 And how he croaked and how the mammy frog  
 Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was  
 Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs too  
 For they were yellow in the sun and brown  
 In rain.

Then one hot day when fields were rank  
 With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs  
 Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges  
 To a coarse croaking that I had not heard  
 Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.  
 Right down the dam gross bellied frogs were cocked  
 On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some  
 hopped:  
 The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat  
 Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.  
 I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings  
 Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew  
 That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.



### ***Death of a Naturalist Analysis:***

Death of a Naturalist is a poem about a child and his relationship with nature. The title of the poem is metaphorical because throughout the poem no one actually dies, in that way by "Death of a naturalist" the speaker does not indicate a literal death but a metaphorical death such as losing passion for nature or the loss of childhood thoughts a naturalist still dies as one can see in the poem because of the death of his younger brother. The speaker has nostalgic feelings for the period of time he was interested in nature. In the first four lines of the poem using words such as "festered and rotted" that are related to death and decay they are both foreshadowing the metaphorical death of the poet's passion for nature. By using such pessimistic words one might realise he has negative feelings of nostalgia.

The poetical risk in his early stages is realised despite the fact that the poem seems positive about nature. The next line starts with an oxymoron "gargled delicately" gargling is a rough sound and can not be delicate, This use of oxymoron indicates that the speaker used to be found pleasure in the sound of nature even if they were repulsive and disgusting. Adding such a high number of images of nature suggests that nature is alive in the speaker's heart and he is still interested about it. Later on, In the line "every spring I would fill ..." The choice of using every indicates the fascination of the speaker was enduring, here we could see one of the nostalgic components which is self reflection. Also the choice of language in the next lines shows that the persona is young "Mammy frog and Daddy frog", The reputation of "and" again indicates how much the speaker is enthusiastic and passionate about nature. "They were yellow in the sun and brown in rain" The word rain here is foreshadowing something negative which is the metaphorical death because rain has a negative connotation in general.

The second stanza starts with "Then" which shows a change in time and the tone of the poem changes to a more serious tone, The language choice has also become more negative. Nature scares the speaker and he is not comfortable within it anymore. "Gross-bellied" and "loose necks" this choice of language suggests that all the things that the speaker was interested in now bother him. In the next lines by personifying the frogs as kings the persona shows that the frogs and nature have power over him. In the last line of the poem the persona states that his changing perspective about nature from love to fear is permanent and he will never love nature again. This line shows how this accident has had impacted the speaker's life permanently. One might also think this poem is a sort of autobiographical memory because the persona indirectly narrates the coincidence that happened to his family in the past and how it affected his life now.

### ***3.2 Mid-Term Break***

I sat all morning in the college sick bay  
Counting bells knelling classes to a close.  
At two o'clock our neighbours drove me home.  
In the porch I met my father crying—  
He had always taken funerals in his stride—  
And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow.  
The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the  
pram  
When I came in, and I was embarrassed  
By old men standing up to shake my hand  
And tell me they were 'sorry for my trouble'.  
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,  
Away at school, as my mother held my hand  
In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.  
At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived  
With the corpse, stanced and bandaged by  
the nurses.  
Next morning I went up into the room.  
Snowdrops  
And candles soothed the bedside; I saw him  
For the first time in six weeks. Paler now,  
Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,  
He lay in the four-foot box as in his cot.  
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him  
clear.  
A four-foot box, a foot for every year.

### ***Mid-Term break Analysis.***

Almost the the poems of Seamus Heaney Are nostalgic poems because of the the persona's privet life loosing a member of his family and being away from his hometown raised nostalgic feelings in his heart and these feelings had impacts on his poems. Mid-term break is a depressing poem about the tragic death of the poet's brother, Since It is an autobiographical poem about the traumatic event of the speaker's childhood it shows that the poem is a nostalgic poem .The poem starts with the first-person pronoun which indicates that the speaker is the first narrator of the occasion'.The poet is narrating his old days when he was in high school when he got told that his brother is dead.In the first stanza the speaker is sitting in the sick bay counting the knell bells which is actually just a school bell,He uses knell because the bells remind him of bell knelling for the funeral he will face when he goes home and witnesses the death of his brother .sitting alone and thinking about what is waiting for him indicates another nostalgic element which is emotion regulations also the speaker has an emotional character ,Nostalgia is completely about sentiments and feelings and this element plays a great role in this poem(. Psychology Today,2023).

The second stanza the speaker says that his father is usually composed and does not get emotional at the funerals but he finds him crying now this indicates this death has really affected him.Later on,Everyone treats the speaker as an adult but he does not know how to react when he says "I was embarrassed by old men standing up to shake my hand".The next stanza starts with an Euphemism in the line "sorry for your trouble "Because trouble can go away but the death will last forever and never goes away,It is also a cliché because it is said to provide consolation and show sympathy.Seamus feels a sense of guilt when he says "away at school because the accident was happened in his absence.Grief is portrayed differently by the character's reactions of the poem,The mother shoes grief in the form of anger. "Angry and tearless sigh"

signifies pure grief. Anger is a strong feeling she cannot regulate her emotions, She can not cry because she is still in shock and grieves in private. Using the word 'the corpse' by speaker for his brother is to reduce his pain instead of saying my brother, And the body is completely bandaged because as the speaker said in the second stanza " It was a hard blow " . "Snowdrops And candles soothed the bedside" indicates that the room is a place for mourning now, He again feels guilty in the line "saw him For the first time in six weeks. Paler now," because he was not with him when he died. "He lay in the four foot box as in a cot" symbolizes how peaceful he looks and he is safe, Also Using number four indicates he was small and it is symbolic for his age, each feet for a year. the speaker plays the main role in the poem and self reflection is the basic component of nostalgic experience . This reflection indicates how relevant and consequential the past memories are and how they have affected his life in present.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, In spite of changes in its meaning over time, nostalgia has not lost its importance in literature. It is used in novels , poems, and plays to evoke feelings of sorrow or pleasure when one is recalling his past experiences.the concept of Nostalgia is indistinguishably associated with the individual's relationship with their past roots. This link between individuals and the associations of their first home is one constantly revisited by Seamus Heaney. From his first 1966 collection *Death of a Naturalist*.

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