

## Studying the Nostalgic Process in Mowlavi's Poems\*

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### ABSTRACT

Nostalgia is a style of writing in literature. Based on this style, the author or poet illustrates the memories of himself painfully and regretfully. The contents of nostalgia in poems of Mowlavi, the famous 7<sup>th</sup> Hejri century, can be found. In this paper, at first we define the nostalgia and its indexes, then the nostalgic contents of Masnavi Mowlavi, with some evidences from hid lyrics, are assessed. The results of this study show that the main focus of nostalgic feeling in Mowlana's works is on being away from hometown, spiritual and eternal origin of man and desires to go back to the worthy origin. The individual nostalgia, the childhood and the hometown are pictured in a metaphoric style by Mowlavi.

**KEYWORDS:** Mowlavi, Masnavi Maanavi, Nostalgia, Psychology.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Mowlana Jalal al Din Mohammad Balkhi Rumi was born in Balkh city in 1208. In his childhood, he and his family left the hometown and migrated to Anatolia (the present Turkey). Being born in a family with literary and scientific tendencies prepared the situation for him to become as a prominent member among the wise people. His meeting with Shams Tabrizi made him to leave the style of that period scientists and also his father's and deeply focused on the romantic mysticism. After thee rich thoughts, feeling of being away from the hometown (Khorasan) made him a person separated from the real origin of soul.

Love and eternal longing to return to his lover was reflected in his nostalgic lyrics of "Shams Separation". He wrote Masnavi stories with the nostalgic contents. Since that the main theme of Mowlavi's poems are these nostalgic ones, studying them will considerably help us to decode the mental and psychological aspects of his life.

In this paper, at first we define the concepts and characteristics of nostalgia. Then, we study them in Mowlavi works. The focus of this study is on Masnavi Mowlavi and Mowlavi Lyrics known as "Gazalyat e Shams". Reference of Masnavi evidences in the main text is as follows (Mowlavi, 1987.2:55). That is, couplet 55 from second book of Masnavi Mowlavi. The Address (Reference) of "Kolliyat Shams" showing by coplets number.

### 2. Nostalgia

The word "Nostalgia" roots in two Greek words: nosto and nost which means hometown and coming back home and aglia, aglos or log which means suffering, desires and regrets. Based on this fact, the unbearable desire of going back hometown can be the first and initial meaning of nostalgia (Nafisi, 1992: Nostalgia part). The most common meaning of this term is "the excess longing for going back to the lost period and situation (Anvari, 2002: Nostalgia part), homesick and regret of the past" (Pouafkari, 1997: Nostalgia part). Nostalgia roots in psychology and then it is used in literature. In literature, it is called as a style of writing based on that the poet or the author painfully and regretfully pictures the past or a place as a memory (Anoushe, 1997: 1396). This regret can be about hometown, childhood, desirable political, religious and economical situation in the past and severe longing to return to the past (Ashouri, 2002: 246).

Generally, nostalgia has some characteristics such as regretful remembering and tendency towards the past, tendency towards going back to the hometown, archaism, myth- making and taking refuge to Utopia (Aali Abbs Adabad, 2008:157).

In the modern literary studies, the nostalgia is divided to two individual and social kinds: "based on individual nostalgia, the poet or the author focuses oj a period of his/her lifetime, while in social nostalgia, the social situation of person is important. According to this division, we can divide the individual nostalgia to immediate and continuous periods. In individual and immediate nostalgia, the creator of the work

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focuses on the moments of life in the past” (Shamlu, 1996:11), but in continuous nostalgia, the poet or the author pictures the whole past moments of his/her life.

Personal memories include the events which person experiences them during the life. Love and lovely life, journeys which affected the person, are some personal memories which are repeated as the result of dissatisfaction from the present situation and leads to nostalgic feeling.

The collective memory also comprises of events which can be national or ethnical, for example war, revolution and lack of a religious or political leader. “This memory in Yung psychology is called “collective unconscious” that is the ancestors’ experiences during the million years which are not narrated or events before the history which is added by each century” (Raas, 1996: 98).

### 3. Mowlavi and Nostalgia

The whole prominent events of scholars’ life which led to memory-making, re reflected in their works. Mowlana poems are full of nostalgic contents. He links the nostalgic feeling to returning happiness. He uses the name of source next to the destination. He reflected the nostalgic feeling in his lyrics especially his main work called *Masnavi Manavi* and also the tales and different stories. We can name “Ney Name” (first 18 verses of *Masnavi*), the story of king and the maid, Parrot and the Merchant, king and the hawk and duck and hen.

#### 3.1 individual and collective Contents

Individual and collective Contents are not directly mentioned in Mowlana’s works. We can get the nostalgic feeling of his childhood and also his life time through some metaphors and some poems. For example Khorasan in the following verse and Bokhara means this one.

‘You took me here from Khorasan to Greek to join them and be happy’ (Aflaki, 1996:207).

Mowlana shows his dissatisfaction from present situation by his feelings and links it to nostalgic feeling of ideal situation:

‘Whatever is in people’s hand are worthless, I wish that sweetly mineral.

I am bored from these exhausting accompanies; I need a brave God man and Rostam’ (Mowlavi , 1999: 4626).

Mowlavi also write some poems for the dead people:

‘Alas, alas, alas, the doubtful eyes cried for those eyes / Salah Al Din king went away such as shooting an arrow and the arc cries’ (Mowlavi, 1999: 31058).

#### 3.2 Homesick

Homesick is the basis of homesick feeling of many poets which is reflected in their being away from hometown. In Naser Khosro, Masoud Sad and Shahryar poems we can categorize *Vatanyat* and *Hasbyat* in this group. The mental aspect of homesick reminds the main origin of the poet. *Ney Name* is one of them (Ghafoori, 2010:117).

‘O kings, we are the strangers of the separation, listen to us going towards God’ (Mowlavi , 1999 : 4627).

Psychologists “believe that person’s separation from home, continuous changes, losing the family members, incompatibility problems and feeling loneliness” (Tilburg, 1997:802, quoted by Sharifyan & Teymouri, 2006: 34) are the main reasons of homesick. However, the homesick of Mowlana refers to soul loneliness. It is described in Sheglgl’s sentence as follows: “the soul is exiled. The soul which is the original place of human being, lives in this world and is away from the real home” (Seyer & Lowi, 2004:131).

“You give me energy and you are from my hometown, you love the others. But it is not the loyalty?”

‘Being homeless is enjoyable for you; you have forgotten the home, that old Kabuli has deceived you’ (Mowlavi , 1999: 194-5).

This homesick is imposed us by physical body:

‘When you take me upwards and towards the jail, as close members to God, I will become alone as stranger’ (Mowlavi , 1999: 1867).

Mowlana has considered this mystic perspective much more than the others. In the story of “*Vakile Sadre Jahan*” the story of man’s separation from origin is pictured in the best way. “*Vakil* is the irony of man or his soul who once was the closest one to God. Committing sin separated him from God” (Sharifyan, 2007:55). therefore, homesick feeling in a reed is the crying soul of him and he tells the story of reed separation from the canebrake:

'Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations  
Saying "ever since I was parted from reed bed, my lament has caused man and women to moan / I need a person with this problem to tell my story of longing pain' (Mowlavi, 1987,1: 3).  
This pathetic separation leads person to deep nostalgic feeling:  
'As the result of our grief, the days lost their value and they are accompanied by the grieves' (Mowlavi, 19871: 15).

### **3.3 Homeland Nostalgia**

From Sufi's point of view, homeland is a sacred place which man is separated from it. Base of mystical literature is to perceive the sanctity and originality of beyond world and invalidity and transient nature of this world. Having mystical tendency towards the homeland is far away from the epic literature believes. Mowlavi believes that the homeland is located beyond the body.

'Don't stop loving the homeland that is beyond the body  
If you want the homeland, you should pass the river  
This narration is right  
Don't read it wrong' (Mowlavi, 1987, 4:211-212).

Mowlana's homeland tendency is "one of the prominent people's characteristics. It also includes the worldview, high ambitions and friendly behavior with people" (Maslow, 1993:121).

Strange soul which is valuable, is longing a place from which it comes. Because of this, the whole existence of man is not allocated to that sacred place "soul eagerly wants to get back its origin. It means that he has seen the beloved there. After separation, he has been suffering from being in a prison of this world. But when he renewing the promise (Ahd e Aalast), he will keep the promise and looks forward the eternal direction (Gibleh)" (Schimel, 2003: 49-50).

Man lived in Lahuti world and then came to Nasouti world:

'I go there, I go there, I was there and then I will go there  
Free me, free me, I am exhausted here  
I was a Lahuti bird; can you see that I became Nasouti?  
I did not see the trap and suddenly was caught' (Mowlavi , 1999: 4714).

Man is continuously looking forward the Utopia. "This ideal city is as historical as the man's civilization. Since the emergence of the human society, man has been looking forward the Utopia. He has imagined it as this world's paradise. There is a place with no suffering, pain, illness; aging etc. the oldest well-known legend about this world paradise is Gilgamesh Epic" (Asiil, 1381/2002:18). From Mowlana's point of view, one of the main cities of hometown is City of Love. Man does not appreciate it gradually become away from that:

'I traveled and went to every city but I have not seen a city like city of Love.  
I did not appreciate it from the beginning and as the result of my madness I suffered from its being away' (Mowlavi , 1999: 15873).  
Place of this city is in heaven or nowhere:  
'We were in the heaven and close to God; we go there again because it is our city' (Mowlavi , 1999: 4912).

Finally, wherever it is, we eagerly awaiting the love city:

'The beloved said the lover: o you have visited many cities as a stranger  
Which one is the best one?

The lover said: city in which the beloved is there' (Mowlavi, /1987,3: 3808).

The nostalgic feeling about hometown in "parrot and merchant" story in Masnavi is mainly considered. Parrot was prisoner in merchant's house and regretfully tells the memories of free flying with the friends:

'Is it fair to be in prison, while you are sometimes in open air and sometimes in the tree branches?

Is it friends loyal to be in the prison while they are in the garden?' (Mowlavi m, 1987.1: 1557)

The merchant determined to go to the India and asks help from the friends to get back home:

'You friends! Remember this poor bird which once was in the meadow' (Mowlavi, 1987.1: 1559).

The merchant took the parrot's message to his friends. In this time one of the birds fell down and died. Merchant told this story to the parrot and the parrot understands the content of the message:

'When the bird heard what his friend did, he shook, fell down and become cold' (Mowlavi, 1987.1: 1691).

Parrot pretended he died and the merchant had to through it away. The death freed the parrot and he could go back his hometown:

'After that, the merchant through it out of the cage and parrot flew on the tree

The dead parrot flew in the way that the East Sun could shine' (Mowlavi, /1987.1: 1825-6). The homesick which made the parrot to suffer from remembering the past days, is the nostalgic base of this story.

### 3.4 Nostalgia of getting the beloved

Every creator longs the evolution and since that the highest level of existence is God, then the real beloved is God (MollaSadra, quoted by Yasrebi, 1989:28). Therefore, love to the real identity is a string motivation and factor of directing the all phenomenon especially human being:

'Whoever falls apart from the real identity, he will definitely look forward to it' (Yasrebi, 1989:28).

'There are many events in the world which related to the love, if there were not any love in the world, it would be depressing' (Mowlavi, 5: 3854).

Enjoyable feeling of getting the beloved has reflected Mowlavi's regression in a lyric: 'Show me face, I need flowers and gardens / Open your lips; I need the taste of honey come out from behind the clouds' (Mowlavi, 1999: 4626). 'Like Jacob I moan a lot and I am longing for visiting Josef' (Mowlavi, 1999: 4627).

The most piteous nostalgic feeling of Mowlavi is reflected in "Shams" separation: 'Where is Tabriz Shams al hag and where did he go? / Where is our homeless friend?' (Mowlavi, 1999: 230700).

The story of "king and maid" in Masnavi is so interesting. In this story a king falls in love with a maid and tried to get her. However, after a short time, the maid becomes ill and the king calls the experienced doctors to the palace. The doctor referred to the maid's past to understand the maid's problem:

'The doctor slowly asked the maid where she was from, because the cure of each city is different from each other. / He also asked who close friend with her was / He checked her pulse one by one and continued asking those questions' (Mowlavi, 1987.1: 147-149).

The doctor asked the name of cities and finally got his aim:

'He asked the name of cities and homes one by one. There was no sigh of change in her face and her pulse. / Her pulse hit faster when the doctor asked about Samarghand / The pulse become faster and her face paled. Finally he named a goldsmith man / When the doctor discovered the secret, he could cure the woman' (Mowlavi, 1987.1: 166-169).

The doctor understood that the maid became suffered from illness as the result of being away from her beloved. So they brought the goldsmith from his town to the palace and they could marry:

'The doctor told king that o you the king! Let this maid go with this man

It leads to her happiness and she will be cured' (Mowlavi, 1987,1: 198-199)

After the marriage, the grief of maid paled and she was cured. The main nostalgic base of this story is separation between lovers and the beloved which affected the soul and body of the maid.

The story of charming and attractive fort also describes a beautiful girl's love in which king's son lost his life. In this story, the princes are desires and they are symbol of scholars who are not satisfied with their hometown. "China country in this story is symbol of strange and unknown destination in where the final fate of man is identified" (Homayi, 1987:28)

Fort was very attractive and charming for them and made them to fall in a trap 'Everyone cried as a cloud and scratched the hand, they also said: alas!' (Mowlavi, 1987, 6: 2768).

### 3.5 Nostalgia of retuning to its own origin

"All the mythologies show us that man enjoyed the happiness and freedom once. Unfortunately he lost this situation as the result of descent. That is, it led to separation between heaven and the earth. At first in paradise age, Gods used to come to the earth and be with human beings. Human beings also could climb the mountains, trees or the ladders and even the wings of birds and fly to the heaven" (Elyadeh, 1995 :58). According to Maslow's theory about evolution, Mowlavi passed the personality growth periods one by one (Maslow, 1993 :121). Therefore, we can say that his idea about being a stranger and far away from the hometown is beyond the physical and material world. The most important nostalgic content in Mowlavi's idea is returning to the man's origin:

Why should not we return to our first world, we are from a different world but live in this one. Thousands of yells came from heaven; you do not pay attention that where this yell is from.

Mowlavi enforces this view in the story of hawk and the woman's house. There was a hawk trained by the king. One day he flew away from the palace and went towards a poor house of a woman. This story is symbol of a man who has been away from his hometown as the result of his stupidity and suffered from difficulties and problems. However, after a short time feels regret and longs to get back the hometown. This

coddle hawk which flew away because of his curiosity and the reason that he wanted to be on better situation, he was caught up in a poor house of an old woman. He feels regret and longs to get home again:

'The woman tied up his feet and cut his tail. She also cut his nail

She said that those bad people had not behaved friendly with you and your nails have become longer' (Mowlavi, 1987, 2: 325-326).

From one hand, king was looking forward the hawk and from the other hand, hawk wanted to go back home. Finally, the king found hawk and after blaming him he said that whoever leaves the home, will face with these problems: 'Suddenly he saw the hawk in smoke and dust and started crying loudly / He said that it is your punishment because you had not been loyal to us how you can tolerate being in the hell while you do not know that the hell residents are not the same' (Mowlavi, 1987, 2: 330-336).

Hawk who had experienced being away from the home, started singing and said that he was wrong.

He rubbed the king's hand and by doing this, he showed that he was wrong

At the end of story, repentance and regret returns him to the home. These two are the main and nostalgic bases of this story.

Mowlana pictures the Sufi and their prominent situation that has been caught up among the fool and ignorant people. It is done in story of hawk among the owls. He does not pay attention to poor situation of owls. The owls try to get rid of him but they do not know that the hawk is also bored from that place (Zarrinkub, 1987 :194).

Mowlavi pictures the story of duck and hen in a nostalgic way. "This symbolic tale compares the sea with non material world and land with material world. The human being is a seabird who belongs to non material world and as the result of being in the land; he has forgotten his origin"(Zamani, 2006 :920).

Base on this story, every thing finally get the origin even though it had grown in the other place. "This symbol show that human being's soul will finally leave this material world and as it is his natural feeling, he will go to the non material world which is beyond the all material things" (Zarrinkub, 1987 :217).

Mowlana believes that the desire to return the hometown and origin is based on human being's nature:

'Although a hen has grown and supported the duck under his wings as a nanny, the real mother is the sea but the nanny was from the land and bad earth' (Mowlavi, 1987.2: 3765-3767).

By passing the time, mankind becomes much more eager to get back to his origin:

'Feeling of going to the sea which is your desire comes from your nature

Desire to be in the land refers to this fact that your nanny is there. Leave your nanny who is a bad one' (Mowlavi, 1987.2: 3768-3769).

Mowlana believes that being wondered in this world and feeling of regret generally reflects that human being had fallen apart from his nature and origin:

'Mankind is running away from this material world to this and that side. He cries loudly while looking for that origin'(Mowlavi , 1999: 208).

## **Conclusion**

Although the term "nostalgia" as an unconscious behavior entered to literature from psychology, it is still considered as inseparable part of poem. Individual nostalgia of childhood, being far away from hometown, social nostalgia, ethnical, national and mythical nostalgias are abundant in Persian poems. Mowlavi, because of his background, personality, and charming - gentle poetic feelings, has considered the nostalgia much more than the other poets. Masnavi and Mowlavi Lyrics are full of nostalgic feeling, being away from the eternal paradise and longing to return there. Ney Name, story of maid and king, story of parrot and merchant, hawk and old woman's house, hawk and the owls, duck and hen, the attractive fort picture the most pathetic imaginations and interpretations of Mowlana and his nostalgic feelings.

Mowlavi's lyrics are the bed of the deepest lovely sadness which is pictured in "Shams". There is not social nostalgia in Mowlana poems. However, the individual and personal nostalgia are reflected as metaphors. The lower layers of his poems reflect his childhood and hometown.

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