

Home Exists Only in Memory: Nostalgia and Psychological Alienation in Benyamin's *Goat Days*

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores nostalgia and psychological alienation in Benyamin's *Goat Days* by utilising Jerome Bruner's Narrative psychology. It emphasizes the psychological struggles of Najeeb rather than the physical and social issues. This paper contends that Najeeb Muhammed's alienation stems not only from his physical alienation in the desert, but also from the disintegration of his sense of identity. In the desert, Najeeb loses his words, his link to society, and his acknowledgment as a human. As a result of these losses, Najeeb undergoes a significant deterioration of identity. It suggests that identity diminishes when a person is unable to create a significant narrative of their existence. Nostalgia is essential for Najeeb's survival. In a void setting, recollections of his family, his native place, and his previous life assist him in maintaining his mental resilience. Nostalgia is perceived not as a weak emotion but rather serves as

a means of resistance. By recalling his past self, he safeguards his identity from being erased. Narrative psychology suggests that individuals construct their identity through the stories they share about their lives. When Najeeb tells his story later, his pain is structured into a significant narrative, turning his disorder into clarity, restoring his fractured identity, enabling him to take charge of his life story and articulate the experiences of the migrant workers who have been muted.

Keywords: Nostalgia, Psychological alienation, Narrative psychology, Dehumanisation.
