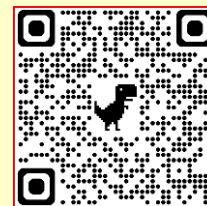


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Transcending Physical and Political Borders: Nostalgia and the Araz River

Reza Talebi^{1*}, Maryam Gholizadeh²

¹ Religious Studies, University Of Leipzig, Germany

² Region Studies, University Of Bashkant, Turkey

Corresponding Author: Reza Talebi

ABSTRACT

This study examines the enduring phenomenon of collective nostalgia among Turkic people on both sides of the Araz River, which challenges the significance of geopolitical borders and fosters a mental erosion of their impact. Despite two centuries of efforts by governing authorities to assimilate the Azerbaijani population through cultural integration and stricter border controls, a shared cultural identity rooted in Bayati (or Mani) has persisted. As a cornerstone of Turkic oral literature, Bayati expresses the pain of separation and longing for unity, often using emotionally charged phrases like O tay-Bu tay or O yan-Bu yan ("the other side—this side") to reflect the agonizing division between ethnic fellows. This study also investigates the cultural and symbolic narratives that differentiate the region's communities, highlighting how Azerbaijanis leverage cultural expression to counteract imposed divisions. Through statistical analysis of Bayati and its sociopolitical implications, the research underscores the symbolic role of the Araz River as both a divider and a unifier, illustrating how nostalgia resists commodification, sustains collective memory, and shapes contemporary identity in a globalized world.

KEY WORDS: Nostalgia, Border Erosion, Separation, Globalization, Iran, Azerbaijan, Maghami Music, Bayati, Poetry, Araz, Shared Geography

1. Introduction

Nostalgia in bayatis goes beyond personal sentiment to encompass collective memory and shared identity. The river, as a powerful metaphor, symbolizes the pain of separation and the hope for reunion, making it a recurring theme in these poems. As an element of Azerbaijani oral literature, bayatis have been transmitted across generations, serving as a vessel for cultural memory and emotional expression. They preserve the desires, fears, and aspirations of a people navigating a divided geography.

Through themes of love, loss, and longing, Araz emerges as a cultural and emotional anchor. The following bayatis illustrate this sentiment:

•Araz ağlar, dağ ağlar,
Ayılmayan yuxular,
Araz'la bölünənlər,
Hər zaman ayrılıqlar.
•Araz axar, yol eylər,
Ay sevdə ilə dolu köllər,
Ayrılıq dərdi ağırdır,
Qəlbimizə iz salar.

The Araz weeps, the mountains weep,
 Unwakened dreams,
 Those divided by the Araz,
 Forever face separations.
 The Araz flows, carving its path,
 Oh, heads filled with love,
 the pain of separation is heavy,
 leaving marks upon our hearts.

These examples show how bayatis transform the physical and cultural significance of Araz into emotional narratives, reinforcing its role as a nostalgic symbol.

The transition from traditional oral literature to modern digital forms has introduced new dimensions to the nostalgic representation of Araz. With globalization and the commodification of cultural elements, bayatis are now featured in contemporary formats, such as songs, films, and social media. While these adaptations expand the reach of bayatis, they often strip away the depth of traditional emotional connections.

For example, modern Azerbaijani music incorporates Araz as a theme, often presenting it in stylized, commodified formats that cater to urban audiences far removed from the river's historical and cultural context. Similarly, digital media uses Araz as a symbol in visually appealing ways, emphasizing its aesthetic over its emotional and cultural depth. The Aras River has historically played a profound role in shaping the culture and identity of the Azerbaijani people. As a geographical and cultural boundary, it has become a nostalgic element in the collective memory of those living on both sides of its banks. This nostalgia, deeply rooted in the sorrow of separation and the hope for reunion, finds prominent expression in Azerbaijani Bayatis. These traditional, oral poetic forms convey the emotions and experiences of those whose lives are intertwined with the Aras.

This study seeks to examine the concept of Aras nostalgia as represented in Azerbaijani Bayatis and analyze the role of these poems in reinforcing or diluting cultural identity on both sides of the river. Employing Feuerbach's philosophical concepts and qualitative methods merely as tools for indexing and analysis, the primary aim is to explore these Bayatis within their cultural and social contexts rather than through a purely philosophical lens.

In Azerbaijani Bayatis, nostalgia reflects not only personal emotions but also collective experiences and identities. Transmitted orally across generations, these poems serve as mirrors of the aspirations, loves, and longings of the people of the region. The Aras River, symbolizing separation, holds a unique semantic weight in these Bayatis, representing both sorrow and the hope for eventual reunification.

Qualitative analysis of Bayatis related to the Aras enables a deeper examination of cultural and social changes on both sides of the river. This study also addresses the impact of globalization and the commodification of nostalgia on the representation of such sentiments in folkloric literature. Today, many nostalgic elements once expressed in Bayatis are reproduced in modern formats such as music, film, and digital media. However, these transformations often challenge and, at times, dilute the authentic nostalgic sentiments tied to the Aras.

This research focuses on the nostalgic concept of the Aras in

Azerbaijani Bayatis and aims to answer the following questions: Has the nostalgia associated with the Aras retained its strength in connecting people on both sides of the river? And how has this sentiment evolved or been altered in response to cultural, social, and global changes? By addressing these inquiries, the study offers insights into the relationship between oral literature, cultural identity, and social transformation in a region profoundly influenced by separation and global dynamics.

2. Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions to understand the evolving role of Araz in bayatis and Azerbaijani culture:

1. *Does nostalgia for Araz continue to connect communities across the river?*
2. *How have globalization and digitalization reshaped the representation of Araz in bayatis?*
3. *What role do bayatis play in preserving cultural identity amid these changes?*

Methodological Approach

To answer these questions, this research combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Content analysis explores the themes of nostalgia and separation in bayatis, while the Feuerbach Index evaluates the relationship between geographical proximity and the intensity of nostalgic sentiments. Regression analysis quantifies the factors influencing nostalgia, such as oral and digital transmission and geographical proximity.

Preliminary findings suggest that while the intensity of nostalgia has declined due to modern influences, bayatis continue to serve as a cultural reservoir. The oral tradition of bayatis remains a critical medium for expressing and preserving the cultural identity tied to Araz, even as younger generations increasingly engage with these themes through digital formats.

By focusing on the nostalgic significance of Araz in bayatis, this study highlights the intricate relationship between oral literature, cultural identity, and modern societal changes. Araz remains an enduring symbol of longing and connection, yet its representation is evolving. This research underscores the importance of preserving traditional expressions like bayatis, which not only reflect a shared cultural history but also adapt to the challenges of a globalized and digital world. Through this lens, the study provides a deeper understanding of how nostalgia and cultural identity intersect in the context of Azerbaijani literature and history.

3. Importance of Research

This study, centered on the role of nostalgia in Azerbaijani Bayatis on both sides of the Araz River and emphasizing the concept of Araz and separation, holds significant importance from multiple perspectives:

3.1. Analyzing Nostalgia as an Identity Tool Across Two Geographies

One of the key aspects of this research is the examination of the strength or weakening of nostalgic sentiment among people who share a common culture but live in two distinct geographical regions. Bayatis, as reflections of profound emotions and collective experiences, enable us to understand how nostalgia has been shaped and transformed through the social, historical, and political processes of both sides of the Araz River.

3.2. Araz River as a Symbol of Separation and Unity

The Araz River has long served as a dual symbol of separation and

connection. This study sheds light on how this river, as a natural element, has become a metaphor for loss, longing, and simultaneously, a hope for unity in the collective memory and literature of the people. Bayatis associated with Araz not only reveal the personal and emotional dimensions of this separation but also serve as a mirror for understanding its broader social and cultural impacts.

3.3. Examining Differences and Similarities in Nostalgia Across Two Regions

By analyzing Bayatis, this research investigates how nostalgia has taken different forms in two geographies among people sharing a common culture, influenced by policies, social conditions, and historical transformations. Is the perception and expression of this sentiment uniform on both sides of the Araz, or are there fundamental differences?

3.4. Impact of Globalization and the Commodification of Nostalgia

In today's world, nostalgia has increasingly become a commodified and commercial phenomenon. This research aims to illustrate how Bayatis linked to Araz have been reproduced in modern forms such as music, films, and digital content, and whether this trend has strengthened or diminished the nostalgic feelings among the people.

3.5. The Role of Bayatis in Preserving Cultural Identity

Bayatis, as a part of Azerbaijani oral literature, play an unparalleled role in preserving and transmitting the values, aspirations, and experiences of the people. By analyzing these Bayatis, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural identity has been maintained or altered over time.

3.6. Opportunities for Psychological and Sociological Analysis

The analysis of Bayatis provides an opportunity to examine the effects of nostalgia on collective emotions, social cohesion, and even psychological resilience among individuals on both sides of the Araz. This facilitates a more precise understanding of the lived experience and cultural adaptation of the people in two different geographies.

This study, focusing on the analysis of Bayatis associated with the Araz, offers a framework to understand the power of nostalgia in shaping collective identity and cultural ties and its influence under changing social conditions. It not only enriches the folklore literature of Azerbaijan but also serves as a bridge to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of culture, nostalgia, and geography.

4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study focuses on how the sentiment of nostalgia is expressed through Bayatis in relation to the Araz River and examines its impact on cultural identity. The study adopts an approach rooted in the relationship between nostalgia, cultural memory, the symbolic meaning of borders, and folk literature. The framework is constructed around the following key elements:

4.1. The Concept of Nostalgia:

Nostalgia is defined as a longing for the past, whether individual or collective (Boym, 2009). This study specifically focuses on cultural and collective nostalgia (Holak et al. 2006). The symbolic duality of the Araz River as both a unifying and dividing force serves as a foundation to explore how this type of nostalgia operates within folk literature.

4.2. The Concept of Bayati:

Bayatis are a significant form of Azerbaijani folk poetry and serve as an oral tradition for conveying the emotions and thoughts of the

people over generations. This study treats Araz-themed Bayatis as reflections of cultural connections and separations. Bayatis play a critical role in the transmission of collective memory.

4.3. Cultural and Geographical Separation:

The Araz River has historically symbolized both physical and symbolic separation between the northern and southern regions of Azerbaijan. This division's impact on cultural identity is expressed through nostalgic sentiments in Bayatis. The study evaluates how this separation influences literature and reflects the past's presence in the present.

4.4. Modernization and Globalization:

Processes of modernization and globalization are transforming cultural values and reshaping nostalgia (Han, 2017). Within this framework, the study investigates how nostalgia in Bayatis is interpreted today under the influence of digitalization and global culture. Particularly, the commodification of nostalgia poses a risk of replacing authentic elements of folk literature with superficial expressions.

4.5. The Relationship Between Nostalgia and Cultural Identity:

Nostalgia plays a critical role in the reconstruction of cultural identity (Sedikides et al. 2008). In this context, the study explores how the sentiment of nostalgia embedded in Araz-themed Bayatis has shaped Azerbaijan's shared identity and how this identity is perceived across two different geographies.

Objectives of the Framework:

Grounded in these elements, this conceptual framework provides a structured approach to understanding the representation of the Araz River in folk literature and analyzing its impact on social memory and cultural identity. This study not only seeks to illuminate the poetic and symbolic significance of Araz in Bayatis but also aims to reveal how nostalgia operates as a cultural force under varying historical and geographical conditions.

5. Hypothesis

Nostalgia in literature is significantly shaped and reinforced by historical and political developments, as observed particularly in Azerbaijani bayatis. In the postmodern era, with the advent of globalization, this nostalgia has transcended traditional poetic forms to manifest in modern media such as films and music. The dissolution of the Soviet Union, increased cross-border mobility, satellite broadcasts, and access to television series have diluted the intensity of such nostalgia. However, during periods of socio-political turmoil, nostalgia resurfaces strongly, reaffirming its role as a cultural and emotional anchor in literary and artistic expressions.

Alignment with Findings:

The research findings strongly align with the hypothesis, as demonstrated by the following points:

5.1. Nostalgia in Bayatis and Historical Contexts:

The symbolic significance of the Araz River, encompassing themes of separation and unity, illustrates how nostalgia was historically strengthened by political and geographical developments. The findings confirm that nostalgia gains prominence in literature during significant historical turning points.

5.2. Impact of the Post-Modern Era and Globalization:

The findings reveal that in the modern era, nostalgia has transitioned into new mediums such as digital platforms, films, and modern music, albeit with a reduction in its traditional intensity. The dissolution of

the Soviet Union and the subsequent satellite broadcasts and communication advancements have diminished the emotional intensity of nostalgic sentiments without entirely eliminating them.

5.3. Revival of Nostalgia During Socio-Political Turmoil:

The findings indicate that nostalgia resurges during times of political and social upheaval. For instance, events like the Karabakh War have revived themes of separation and longing in literature, particularly in bayatis.

5.4. Emotional and Cultural Resonance in Bayatis:

The frequent use of motifs like Araz and Tabriz in bayatis supports the hypothesis that nostalgia preserves and reinforces geographical and cultural ties, particularly during challenging times.

5.5. Dual Impact of Globalization:

The findings demonstrate a dual impact of globalization on nostalgia. While weakening traditional ties, globalization has simultaneously facilitated the reproduction of these ties in modern forms. For example, digital music and cinema have reshaped and recontextualized nostalgia across different platforms.

The research findings largely validate the hypothesis. They highlight how nostalgia, as a literary, cultural, and social phenomenon, has been influenced by historical and political events, evolved into new forms in the modern era, and gained strength during crises. The hypothesis provides a robust framework to understand how bayatis serve as both a traditional cultural anchor and a modern medium for expressing and preserving nostalgia. This dual role of bayatis underscores their enduring relevance in reflecting and shaping the collective memory and identity of Azerbaijani communities across generations.

6. Importance of Research: Nostalgia in Azerbaijani Bayatis Across Araz

Various theorists have examined the concept of nostalgia in relation to modern societies. According to Belk, nostalgia is tied to "hyperreality" and is perceived as a safe haven in modern societies dominated by uncertainty and distrust. Belk defines nostalgia as "an emotional state of longing evoked by an object, scene, scent, or music" (Belk, 1990: 670). This longing often emerges as a romantic reaction to capitalist/modern realities and creates what Löwy & Sayre describe as a "constant search for continuity" (Löwy & Sayre, 2016: 35).

Davis's analysis presents nostalgia as an invitation to a hyperreal world, where individuals, escaping current realities, seek refuge in past memories or even digital spaces. Nostalgia thus acts as an alternative path for dealing with the unpleasant realities of the modern world.

In a study by Sedikides et al. (2008: 307), four main psychological functions of nostalgia are identified:

1. *Generates Positive Affect: Nostalgia creates a positive emotional state.*
2. *Elevates Self-Esteem: It reinforces an individual's sense of self-worth.*
3. *Fosters Social Connectedness: Nostalgia promotes stronger social bonds.*
4. *Alleviates Existential Threats: It mitigates fears related to one's existence and purpose.*

Through these functions, nostalgia acts as a motivational force, bridging the past and present. Moreover, its capacity to reduce psychological stress and restore calm during moments of emotional turmoil makes it a particularly powerful psychological mechanism

(Sedikides et al., 2008: 305).

Nostalgia transcends the mere glorification of the past and can be categorized into four main types:

1. *Personal Nostalgia: Experiences directly arising from individual memories.*
2. *Interpersonal Nostalgia: Experiences indirectly transmitted through others' memories.*
3. *Cultural Nostalgia: Experiences arising from collective cultural or societal events.*
4. *Virtual Nostalgia: Nostalgia indirectly generated through recreations of shared cultural memories.*

These categories, introduced by Holak et al. (2006: 195-196), provide a clear framework for differentiating the individual and collective dimensions of nostalgia.

7. The Significance of Araz in Azerbaijani Literature and Bayatis

The nostalgia associated with the Araz River and its reflection in Azerbaijani literature and bayatis is particularly placed under "cultural" and "personal-cultural" nostalgia in Holak's framework. This classification arises from the following dimensions:

1. **Cultural Nostalgia:** The nostalgia for Araz is often represented as a collective experience rooted in the shared history, culture, and identity of Azerbaijani people. Araz, symbolizing both separation and connection, is not only depicted in bayatis but also extensively in Azerbaijani literature. This cultural relationship is not a direct lived experience but is transmitted through literature, music, and art, making it a collective cultural phenomenon.
2. **Personal Nostalgia:** For many individuals, Araz represents personal lived experiences tied to childhood, rural life, or family journeys. The bayatis composed around Araz often interweave personal lived experiences with collective cultural longing, blending individual and shared emotions.
3. **Virtual Nostalgia:** In the contemporary era marked by modernization and urbanization, many individuals may not have directly experienced the Araz River. Yet, they connect with its nostalgia through the works of poetry, music, and other artistic depictions. This reconstructed nostalgia elevates Araz beyond its geographical reality, making it a symbolic and timeless entity.

8. Expanding the Boundaries of Nostalgia: Modernity and Globalization

As technology evolves and digital platforms emerge, nostalgia has entered new territories. Early tools like mobile phones (e.g. Nokia, Ericsson) and messaging apps (e.g. MSN Messenger, ICQ), which are now considered nostalgic objects, show how collective memory has transitioned into the digital age.

The nostalgia for Araz, tied to Azerbaijani literature, particularly through bayatis, also intersects with "virtual nostalgia." These nostalgic sentiments have adapted to the times, resonating in modern platforms such as digital clips, songs, and films. While these platforms enable the wider dissemination of nostalgia, they also risk diluting its depth by commodifying its essence, as noted by Taşkaya (2013).

9. Methodology: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis of "Araz" in Azerbaijani Bayatis

This research employs an integrative multi-method approach to explore the symbolic, cultural, and nostalgic significance of "Araz" in Azerbaijani Bayatis. By combining content analysis, the Feuerbach Index, and regression analysis, this study bridges qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This holistic framework captures the complex interplay of geographical, cultural, and emotional dimensions, emphasizing the centrality of "Araz" as both a cultural and geographical symbol. The methodology balances the poetic richness of Bayatis with rigorous analytical techniques, providing a comprehensive understanding of their role in Azerbaijani collective memory.

9.1. Research Design

The study was designed to ensure methodological rigor while maintaining the cultural and literary authenticity of Bayatis. It employs a structured yet adaptable approach to account for the diverse oral and written traditions of Azerbaijani folklore.

❖ Data Collection

Corpus Selection

• Sources:

A curated corpus of 120 Bayatis explicitly referencing "Araz" was compiled from:

Folklore archives and poetry collections, emphasizing both traditional and modern renditions.

Contributions by Azerbaijani scholars such as Boratav (1973) and Əliyev (1980).

The corpus ensures a balanced representation of Bayatis from northern and southern Azerbaijani communities, capturing shared and region-specific expressions of nostalgia.

• Selection Criteria:

Only Bayatis that explicitly reference "Araz" or related themes, such as longing, geography, and cultural identity, were included.

Both historical and contemporary Bayatis were incorporated to analyze the evolution of nostalgic themes over time.

Standardization of Texts

• To ensure analytical consistency:

Bayatis were transcribed into a standardized format, addressing linguistic and stylistic variations.

Annotations were added, detailing region, period, and transmission method (oral or written).

9.2. Analytical Framework

The study integrates three complementary analytical methods to provide a nuanced understanding of the themes and sentiments associated with "Araz."

9.2.1. Content Analysis

• Objective:

To systematically examine Bayatis for recurring themes, symbols, and emotional tones.

• output:

Bayatis were segmented into phrases or lines for detailed analysis.

Recurring themes were coded into the following categories:

1. Nostalgia: Expressions of longing, loss, and separation.
 2. Geography: References to landscapes, rivers, and specific locations.
 3. Cultural Identity: Indicators of heritage, collective memory, and traditions.
- ##### • Findings:

"Araz" serves as both a physical landmark and a symbolic repository for collective emotions, embodying themes of separation, unity, and cultural identity.

9.2.2. Feuerbach Index

• Purpose:

To quantify the relationship between geographical proximity to "Araz" and the intensity of nostalgia in Bayatis.

• Methodology:

Variables such as distance from Araz, oral familiarity, and internet familiarity were weighted to calculate the index.

Demographic factors (e.g. age, gender, education) were also considered.

• Findings:

Communities closer to "Araz" exhibited stronger nostalgic sentiments, demonstrating the enduring influence of physical geography on cultural memory.

❖ Regression Analysis

• Objective:

To identify and quantify the factors influencing the prevalence of nostalgic themes in Bayatis.

• Variables:

Dependent Variable: Nostalgia (measured through coded themes).

Independent Variables:

Geographical proximity.

Oral familiarity.

Internet familiarity.

Demographic factors.

• Findings:

Oral familiarity had the strongest positive influence, reflecting the emotional depth of traditional storytelling.

Internet familiarity had a weaker effect, highlighting the limitations of digital transmission in evoking deep cultural resonance.

Geographical proximity significantly shaped nostalgic sentiments, particularly among communities closer to "Araz."

9.3. Thematic Insights

Nostalgia as a Cultural Bridge

The analysis revealed that "Araz" is more than a geographical entity; it is a cultural bridge connecting communities across its banks. Themes of separation, longing, and reunion dominate, reflecting

shared historical experiences.

Impact of Modernization and Globalization

- Globalization and the opening of borders have altered the intensity and expression of nostalgia:

Traditional oral transmission methods have been supplanted by digital media, reducing the emotional depth of nostalgic connections.

Nostalgic themes have migrated to modern artistic forms, such as music, films, and digital content, diluting their original cultural context.

Intergenerational Shifts

- Younger generations, influenced by digital culture, exhibit a weaker connection to traditional Bayatis but engage with "Araz" through modern media.
- The analysis highlights a tension between preservation and modernization in the transmission of cultural memory.

9.4. Limitations

1. Scope:

The focus on "Araz" excludes other significant cultural symbols in Azerbaijani literature.

2. Subjectivity:

Manual coding, while interpretively rich, introduces potential biases. These were mitigated through iterative validation and peer reviews.

9.5. Conclusion

This methodology effectively bridges the qualitative richness of Azerbaijani Bayatis with quantitative rigor, offering a multi-dimensional perspective on the symbolic and cultural significance of "Araz." The integrative framework underscores the resilience of oral traditions in preserving cultural identity while acknowledging the transformative impacts of globalization and digitalization.

10. Bayati in Azerbaijan

The "Bayati" of Azerbaijan are simple and fluent words that encapsulate the loves, aspirations, and dreams of the Azerbaijani people. These Bayatis form the foundation of Azerbaijani folk music, reflecting the thoughts of past generations of this nation.

The diversity and vibrancy of themes are among the prominent and distinct characteristics of Azerbaijani Bayatis, with love holding a special place. The love depicted in Bayatis is tangible, stemming from the secret of life's continuity and flowing through the noble feelings of human compassion.

Beliefs, customs, virtues, and the temperaments of tribes are intricately embedded in Bayatis, accompanied by sorrowful melodies forming the essential foundation of Azerbaijani Bayatis.

In the Azerbaijani language, the tone of the performer plays a crucial role in the delivery of Bayatis. It is the performer who, with their unique taste and creativity, breathes life into Bayatis by making modifications and additions according to their preferences.

Example Bayati:

Penjere nin milleri,
Achip ghizil guller,
Oghlani yoldan iller,
Ghizin shirin dilleri.

("From behind the bars of a window where red roses bloom, the sweet words of the beloved make the lover even more restless.")

One of the common poetic forms in the oral literature of Azerbaijan is "Bayati." Bayatis embody the material and spiritual lives of the Azerbaijani people. Due to their thematic and topical diversity, they are recited during celebrations, mourning ceremonies, moments of solitude, and gatherings—essentially, in any situation or setting. In these four-line verses, philosophical, social, historical, religious, ethical, and lyrical themes are expressed. Hopes and aspirations, prayers and curses, proverbs and wisdom, religious and spiritual beliefs, work songs, rituals and traditions, struggles against exploitation and oppression, love for the homeland and people, and feelings of affection and friendship are all reflected within Bayatis.

Some scholars trace the origin of "Bayati" to "Bayat," one of the 22 prominent tribes of the Oghuz Turks (see Kashgari, I/56; Rashid al-Din, I/42, 58). Today, Bayat clans are scattered across various regions of Iran (for more information, see *Diba*, Bayat). In the Turkic language, "Bayat" or "Bayati" carries meanings such as noble, prosperous, blessed, and wealthy (Clouston, p. 385; Doerfer, II/379; Rashid al-Din, same source; Kashgari, III/158; Jafaroghlu, p. 236).

The connection between "Bayati" and the Bayat tribe becomes more evident when considering the folk music of Azerbaijan. This includes melodies such as "Afshari," "Garayli," and "Varsagi," whose names are also derived from Turkic tribes and communities. Bayati has significantly influenced the folk music and literature of neighboring regions. This influence is evident in the naming of several Iranian musical modes, such as *Bayat-e Esfahan*, *Bayat-e Tork*, and *Bayat-e Kord* (Farzaneh, p. 6).

Bayati is also the name of a melancholic musical mode in Azerbaijani music (Azerbaijan [1], I/183). Azerbaijani music features modes such as "Bayat Qajar," "Bayat Kurd," "Bayat Ajam," "Bayat Shiraz," "Bayat Esfahan," and "Bayat Chupan" (Demirchi, pp. 149, 170–171). Additionally, it is one of the mournful modes of the *Ashiq* tradition in Turkic music. Modes like "Bayati Araban" and "Bayati Bouselik" also exist in Turkic musical heritage (Dogan, pp. 84–85).

In the folklore of Turkic-speaking nations, seven-syllable quatrains are uniquely referred to as "Bayati" in Azerbaijan, while other Turkic peoples use different names (see Afandiyev, pp. 198–199). Structurally and thematically, Bayatis closely resemble Persian quatrains (Robai). Bayati and Turkic oral songs have mutually influenced each other to the extent that it is rare to find a folk song that has not been shaped by Bayatis. The earliest examples of Bayatis were likely composed by poets and musicians renowned in Azerbaijani folklore as "Ashiqs." During the 10th to 13th centuries AH, poets and lyricists such as Amani, Azizi, Sâri Ashiq, Saleh, Majruh, Masum, Bikass, Vagif, Salik, and Zaker composed many Bayatis, examples of which are preserved in anthologies and manuscripts from that era. Notably, the Bayatis of poets like Azizi and Sâri Ashiq are still widely popular among the people (Farzaneh, p. 6).

Bayatis generally consist of four lines. In these quatrains, the first, second, and fourth lines rhyme, while the third line is free, making their structure closely resemble Persian quatrains. The meter of Bayatis is syllabic, with each line composed of seven syllables. Folklorists have identified 17 different types of syllabic patterns in Bayati lines.

The main theme and ultimate purpose of a Bayati are usually expressed in the last two lines (Farzaneh, pp. 7–8). While most Bayatis maintain thematic coherence between their lines, some show a weaker conceptual connection, with the initial lines serving as an

introduction to the central theme expressed in the latter lines. However, without the introductory lines, the subsequent lines would lack the poetic strength and conceptual depth they possess. Folklorists have categorized the lines of Bayatis into roles: the first line as "introduction," the second as "elaboration," the third (where the main theme resides) as "essence," and the fourth as "conclusion" (Namazov, pp. 40–41).

Another literary beauty of Bayatis lies in their delicate and skillful use of wordplay (Farzaneh, p. 9). Folklorists have identified nine different forms of wordplay in Bayatis, the most significant being in refrains, rhymes, and simultaneous use in both.

Among the various forms of oral literature, Bayati most vividly depicts the realities of people's lives. The thematic diversity of Bayatis is so prominent that some collectors categorize them by content and topic, grouping them under headings such as love, personal expression, family life, suffering and dissatisfaction, separation and longing, honesty and bravery, and others (Farzaneh, pp. 13–14). Similar themes are also found in Persian quatrains. One of the key themes in Bayatis is history and the bitter and sweet events it encompasses.

Some Bayatis, which are cheerful, are sung during weddings and joyous gatherings. These types of songs are called "Dil Jalmani." With a bit of investigation, one can trace the initial roots of Azerbaijani folk music in these songs.

In terms of structural coherence, thematic richness, musical harmony, and the oscillation of artistic sentiment, Bayatis are among the most captivating and passionate works of Azerbaijani folk literature. These melodic and enchanting compositions, born of the simple and sincere lives and emotions of the people, resonate with such charm and purity that, especially when sung in their unique tune, they captivate the listener and evoke tears of emotion.

Historical and Cultural Roots

The title "Bayati" is likely derived from the name "Bayat" or "Biyat." According to Shahmarsi (2011), "Bayat" refers to a prominent tribe that influenced Azerbaijani literature and culture. Bayatis, as a reflection of the cultural and emotional experiences of the Bayat tribe, have become part of the collective folk heritage (Shahmarsi, 2011, pp. 323–324). Farzaneh (1986) also attributes Bayatis to the Bayat tribes, emphasizing their influence on the music and literature of Azerbaijan, as well as their connections to musical modes like "Afshari" and "Garayli" (Farzaneh, 1986, p. 12).

10.1. Structure and Poetics

Bayatis consist of four lines. Similar to quatrains, the first, second, and fourth lines rhyme, while the third line is free. The first two lines introduce the main idea, which is elaborated upon in the final two lines. Their meter is based on syllabic metrics, characteristic of oral poetic traditions in Azerbaijan.

Examples:

Azizinem guller,

Agh bilikler guller,

Deryaja aghlin olsa,

Yoxsul olsun guller.

("My dear, the elders mock you; even if you possess wisdom as vast as the sea, you are ridiculed for being poor and without wealth.")

Apardi chaylar meni,

Hefteler, iller meni,

Yukum qorkushum yuki,

Yurdu bu taylar meni.

("Weeks and years, like a river, carry me away, while the burden of grief torments me.")

Bayatis, as cultural artifacts, have traversed generations, preserving the emotions, desires, and struggles of countless people. They offer a glimpse into the historical, philosophical, and social contexts of Azerbaijani culture, maintaining their relevance in both traditional and modern settings.

Cultural Significance

Bayatis are not merely poetic forms but are cultural treasures that connect generations. As noted by Shahmarsi (2011), Bayatis act as a mirror of the Azerbaijani people's experiences, encapsulating themes of love, hardship, and resistance against oppression. Farzaneh (1986) highlights that their widespread oral transmission has contributed to their evolution, allowing them to adapt to the emotional and aesthetic needs of each generation.

10.2. Nostalgia and the Human Experience

Culture is a phenomenon entirely unique to humans and is defined as the sum of everything humanity adds to nature. Encompassing all areas of life—from architecture to music, food, and clothing—culture is also the most distinctive feature that sets humans apart from other living beings. In this context, the term *Homo culturalis*, meaning "the culture-creating being," emerges as one of the most fitting descriptors for humans.

Humans can be defined as beings that walk upright (*Homo erectus*), craft tools (*Homo faber*), communicate through language (*Homo lingua*), possess the ability to symbolize events and objects around them (*Homo symbolicus*), and have the capacity for thought and reasoning (*Homo sapiens*). However, the most fundamental feature that combines these attributes and allows their transfer across generations is humanity's ability to create, learn, and teach culture (*Homo culturalis*). Thus, humans stand out as unique beings who both create and carry culture (Göksu, 2015, p. 24).

The term "nostalgia," derived from the Greek words *nostos* (homecoming) and *algia* (longing), was first introduced in 1688 by Dr. Johannes Hofer as a psychosomatic illness. According to Hofer, nostalgia manifested as "a melancholic state stemming from one's desire to return home" (Özdemir, 2020, p. 9). Hofer identified its most prominent symptoms as "a lifeless and withdrawn appearance," "indifference to everything," and "an inability to distinguish between reality and illusion or past and present."

Hofer explained that nostalgia spreads from the patient's brain to other parts of the body, leading individuals to continuously think of their homeland. He argued that this condition caused serious physical and psychological problems, including nausea, loss of appetite, lung issues, brain inflammation, heart attacks, and high fever. Additionally, suicidal tendencies were observed among patients suffering from nostalgia (Boym, 2009, p. 26).

Nostalgia, like culture, is not a phenomenon that appeals universally to society. It is often rooted in individual experiences and closely tied to one's inner world. In this context, nostalgia expresses a longing for the past. However, while nostalgia is an individual sentiment, it can occasionally gain a societal dimension. For example, shared experiences of a generation during specific periods can transform those times into an area of collective nostalgia. For individuals born in Turkey during the 1980s, childhood and youth from that period

bring collective memories from music to cinema and games to fashion, highlighting nostalgia's potential to create bonds among people (Wolf-Knuts, 2007, p. 179).

Given that a human lifespan is at most 100 years, nostalgia is generally limited to this timeframe. As the digital world and electronic culture weaken ties to the past, nostalgia's intergenerational differences become more apparent. Older individuals, feeling the losses they experienced more acutely, may find nostalgia closer to them, whereas younger generations might have a more distant relationship with it. According to Turner, nostalgia is fundamentally connected to a sense of loss. These losses become more apparent as people age, with the gradual disappearance of people, places, or objects in their lives (Turner, 1987, as cited in Özdemir, 2020, p. 10).

These transformations are part of a natural cycle in life. The deaths of grandparents and parents, the change in neighborhoods, and the replacement of old school buildings with new ones are among the factors that fuel nostalgia. This shows that nostalgia is not merely a longing for the past but also a reflection of the effects of change on individuals. For example, for those who spent their childhood in the 1980s and 1990s in Turkey, neighborhood games, old television series, and the era's popular songs serve as collective memories tied to nostalgia, marking a transition from individual pasts to collective memory (Özdemir, 2020, p. 9).

On the other hand, nostalgia is not limited to losses and longing for the past; it also relates to individuals' efforts to find meaning in their present lives and understand themselves and their surroundings more deeply. By carrying memories from their past into today, individuals reconstruct their identities and establish stronger connections with the world they live in (Boym, 2009, p. 26). This demonstrates that nostalgia is not merely a feeling of melancholy but also an essential step in humanity's quest for meaning.

Araz has served not only as a river in Azerbaijani literature but also as a metaphor carrying profound meanings. Historically symbolizing concepts such as separation, longing, and union, Araz has frequently appeared as a theme in folk literature and bayatis. However, in the modern era, globalization, digitalization, and increasingly permeable borders have reduced this symbol to a nostalgic concept.

11. The Role of Nostalgia in Human Life and Politics

If people did not long for the innocence of their childhood years, the beauty of lost loves, or the values they once passionately cherished in their youth, many legendary works of literature might not have been written, and numerous unforgettable films might never have been made. If the desire to revisit the past—or perhaps the dream, possibility, or wish to change it—were not a feeling that occasionally touched everyone, imaginary inventions like time machines would not have penetrated popular culture so profoundly.

When the term nostalgia first entered the Turkish language, it was predominantly used to describe preferences in music or fashion. We often thought that elderly people, lamenting, "Where are those old holidays?" or "Back when money actually meant something," were also expressing this sentiment. However, nostalgia is not merely a personal feeling, a resentment towards the present, or dissatisfaction with today, often associated with the elderly. In the 21st century, nostalgia has reached a point where it can shape politics and mobilize masses in many countries.

For instance, Donald Trump ascended to the U.S. presidency by promising a return to the days when America was "great." Similarly,

the will that pushed the United Kingdom out of the European Union was fueled by a longing for the days of the British Empire, an era when "the sun never set" on its territories.

11.1. Common Traits of Nostalgic Movements in Politics

Today's politically nostalgic individuals share some common characteristics:

1. Dissatisfaction with the Present: They believe that current circumstances are not favorable or promising.
2. Belief in a "Golden Age": They romanticize a past era when they believe everything was better.
3. Animosity Towards Blameworthy Elements: They harbor resentment towards internal and external factors they believe dismantled that "golden age."

11.2. Nostalgia's Influence in History and Beyond

In Russia, nostalgic sentiments emerged during the 1990s when the country faced economic and political turmoil, manifesting as a longing for the Soviet Union era. Similarly, after the civil war that divided Yugoslavia, masses began fondly remembering the era of Tito with optimism. In China, after the establishment of the "socialist market economy," which deepened income inequality and stripped millions of jobs and retirement security, Maoism was revitalized and reintroduced.

Nostalgia, therefore, is far more than a personal sentiment. It has the power to define political ideologies, shape cultural narratives, and direct the collective memory of societies. Whether it serves as a refuge from contemporary complexities or as a call for the revival of a mythical past, nostalgia remains a significant force shaping human behavior and societal structures.

11.3. Nostalgia in Modern Societies: The Case of Araz River in Azerbaijani Literature

Various theorists have examined the concept of nostalgia in relation to modern societies. According to Belk (1990), nostalgia is closely linked to "hyperreality," serving as a safe haven in modern societies characterized by uncertainty and mistrust. Belk defines nostalgia as "an emotional state accompanied by longing, evoked by an object, scene, scent, or music" (Belk, 1990, p. 670). This longing often manifests as a romantic reaction to capitalist and modern realities, creating a continuous search for continuity among individuals (Löwy & Sayre, 2016, p. 35).

Based on Davis's analysis, nostalgia invites individuals to a hyperreal world, offering them an escape from current realities to past memories or even digital spaces as sanctuaries. In this context, nostalgia acts as an alternative path for coping with the unpleasant realities of modern life.

Research by Sedikides et al. (2008) identifies four primary psychological functions of nostalgia:

1. Generates positive affect,
2. Elevates self-esteem,
3. Fosters social connectedness,
4. Alleviates existential threat.

Nostalgia serves as a motivational force, enabling continuity between the past and the present. Its ability to reduce psychological stress and restore calm during distress makes nostalgia one of the most powerful psychological mechanisms (Sedikides et al., 2008, p. 305).

Types of Nostalgia

Nostalgia transcends the narrow meaning of being merely a longing

for the past. It can be categorized into four types:

1. Personal Nostalgia: Stemming directly from individual memories.
2. Interpersonal Nostalgia: Experienced indirectly through others' memories.
3. Cultural Nostalgia: Arising directly from collective or cultural events.
4. Virtual Nostalgia: Created through indirect representations of collective events.

This categorization, presented by Holak et al. (2006, pp. 195–196), helps delineate the role of nostalgia at both individual and collective levels.

Nostalgia and Azerbaijani Literature

Nostalgia for the Araz River, as reflected in Azerbaijani literature and bayatis, falls predominantly within "cultural nostalgia" and "personal-cultural" categories in Holak's model. The reasons are as follows:

1. Cultural Nostalgia:

Nostalgia for the Araz is often portrayed as part of the collective experience of Azerbaijani people. This nostalgic sentiment is deeply rooted in shared history, culture, and identity. As a symbol of separation and connection, Araz appears not only in bayatis but throughout Azerbaijani literature as a cultural element. This relationship is not a direct experience of the past but is transmitted to newer generations through literature, music, and art, giving it a cultural and collective dimension.

2. Personal Nostalgia:

For some, Araz may be part of their lived experience—linked to childhood memories, rural life, or family journeys. Bayatis about Araz often intertwine individual experiences with collective longings.

3. Virtual Nostalgia:

With modernization and urbanization, many individuals may never directly experience Araz but connect to it through poems, music, and stories. This recreated dimension transforms Araz into a symbol beyond its geographical reality.

11.3.1. Nostalgia and Commodification

In the modern era, many nostalgic elements, including the longing for Araz, have been commodified. Nostalgia, once expressed purely through poems and bayatis, now appears in modern songs, videos, and even advertisements. According to Taşkaya (2013), this process can reduce the authentic meaning of nostalgia to a superficial experience, turning it into a tool for commercial exploitation. Similarly, Byung-Chul Han notes that digitalization trivializes the experience of nostalgia, reducing the past to a "surface-level present."

11.3.2. Globalization and Nostalgia for Araz

Globalization has fundamentally altered the concept of nostalgia in local cultures. Araz, once portrayed as a local and historical element, now appears in global formats such as modern films and songs. While these changes have made such symbols more accessible, they have somewhat diluted the original connection between people and their historical and cultural roots. Han (2017) observes that globalization can transform nostalgia into a commercial and reproducible phenomenon.

Despite these transformations, the longing for Araz continues to thrive in new literary and artistic forms, such as modern music and films. Songs with themes of separation and unity, as well as clips aimed at reconstructing cultural identity, demonstrate the persistence of this historical longing. This suggests that even as traditional expressions of nostalgia fade, their essence continues to thrive in new

forms.

The nostalgia associated with the Araz River in Azerbaijani literature, particularly in the form of bayatis, exemplifies "cultural nostalgia" tied to the shared experiences of a community. This nostalgia reflects not only the sense of separation and longing but also the collective identity and emotional bonds people have with their land. Literature and bayatis, as cultural tools, preserve the past and the shared emotions of society. As Marcel Proust notes, nostalgia is not merely a return to the past but an attempt to reconstruct an eternal moment within memories and artistic creations (Proust, 1913).

12. Expanded Analysis: Employing the Feuerbach Index for a Comprehensive Understanding of Nostalgia and Cultural Dynamics

12.1. Introduction to the Feuerbach Index

The Feuerbach Index is a sophisticated quantitative tool designed to measure the interplay between geographical proximity, cultural familiarity, and nostalgia. This index provides a multidimensional framework that captures how physical distance, exposure methods (oral or internet-based), and demographic factors like age, gender, and education influence the intensity and nuances of nostalgia associated with cultural symbols such as "Araz." By weighting these variables, the Feuerbach Index enables a nuanced understanding of how collective memories and emotional connections to "Araz" manifest across different populations.

12.2. Data Collection and Participant Recruitment

The survey data for this study were gathered through a structured and targeted process to ensure representativeness and validity:

1. Participant Selection:

Respondents were selected from three key regions with varying proximities to "Araz":

Iranian Azerbaijan: Representing communities in close geographical proximity to the river.

Azerbaijan Republic: Capturing a mix of cultural and physical familiarity.

Turkey: Representing a distant population with limited direct exposure to "Araz."

A total of 300 participants were recruited (100 from each region) to ensure balanced representation.

2. Survey Dissemination:

Surveys were distributed through email campaigns and community networks.

Local cultural organizations and folklore archives supported recruitment in Azerbaijani regions.

3. Inclusion Criteria:

Participants needed to have some familiarity with "Araz" through oral traditions, internet exposure, or personal visits.

A balanced demographic representation across age groups (20–40 years), gender, and education levels was maintained.

12.3. Index Construction and Weighting

The Feuerbach Index was calculated using the following variables:

1. Geographical Proximity:

Weighted higher for participants residing closer to "Araz" to reflect the direct impact of physical closeness.

2. Familiarity Method:

Oral traditions were given higher weight due to their deeper emotional and cultural resonance compared to internet-based exposure.

3. Demographic Factors:

Age, gender, and education levels were included to capture variations in nostalgia intensity across different population segments.

The formula for the index integrates these variables as follows:

Feuerbach Index (FI) = (Geographical Proximity $\times$ 1.5) + (Oral Familiarity $\times$ 1.3) + (Internet Familiarity $\times$ 1.0) + (Demographic Adjustments)

$$\text{Feuerbach Index (FI)} = (\text{Geographical Proximity} \times 1.5) + (\text{Oral Familiarity} \times 1.3) + (\text{Internet Familiarity} \times 1.0) + (\text{Demographic Adjustments})$$

12.4. Findings and Detailed Analysis

1. Geographical Proximity and Cultural Transmission

• Proximity's Impact:

Respondents near "Araz" demonstrated a significantly higher reliance on oral traditions, highlighting the river's role as a cultural and emotional landmark.

Oral familiarity percentages:

Iranian Azerbaijan: 67%

Azerbaijan Republic: 75%

Internet familiarity was more prominent in Turkey (70%), reflecting the limitations of physical distance in preserving oral traditions.

• Feuerbach Index Results:

Iranian Azerbaijan: Oral Familiarity: 57.83, Internet Familiarity: 23.13

Azerbaijan Republic: Oral Familiarity: 42.96, Internet Familiarity: 11.46

Turkey: Oral Familiarity: 5.51, Internet Familiarity: 10.29

2. Nostalgia and Symbolism

• Intensity of Nostalgia:

Nostalgia levels decreased with geographical distance:

Iranian Azerbaijan: 70%

Azerbaijan Republic: 60%

Turkey: 30%

Nostalgia for "Araz" remained strongly associated with themes of separation and longing, as reflected in Bayatis:

Separation: Iranian Azerbaijan (80%), Azerbaijan Republic (90%), Turkey (70%).

Nationhood references were minimal, indicating a focus on emotional and cultural ties.

• Globalization's Role:

The spread of internet-based familiarity has reduced the emotional

depth of nostalgia, particularly in distant regions.

Younger generations rely increasingly on digital platforms, diminishing the transmission of rich oral traditions.

3. Role of Gender, Age, and Education

• Gender:

Men exhibited slightly higher familiarity with oral traditions (60%) compared to women (40%).

Women displayed a stronger emotional connection to nostalgic themes, reflecting their deeper engagement with cultural symbols.

• Age:

Younger respondents (20-30 years) relied more on internet familiarity (70%) but still engaged with oral traditions (30%).

Older respondents (30-40 years) showed higher oral familiarity (70%) and less reliance on digital platforms (30%).

• Education:

Higher education levels correlated with stronger nostalgia and oral familiarity:

Master's and Doctorate holders: Nostalgia (70%-80%), Oral Familiarity (30%-45%).

12.5. Conclusion and Implications

The Feuerbach Index demonstrated that geographical proximity and oral traditions are pivotal in maintaining cultural nostalgia for "Araz." However, globalization and the increasing dominance of digital platforms have significantly altered the modes of cultural transmission, particularly among younger generations.

Key Findings:

1. Proximity and Tradition:

Communities near "Araz" retain stronger nostalgic connections through oral traditions.

Digital platforms, while accessible, lack the emotional resonance of traditional methods.

2. Demographic Insights:

Nostalgia varies by age, gender, and education, emphasizing the importance of targeted preservation strategies.

3. Challenges of Globalization:

The shift from oral to internet-based familiarity poses a threat to the authenticity and depth of cultural nostalgia.

Key Responses Comparison Table

Topic	Group One (Iran)	Group Two (Turkey)	Group Three (Azerbaijan)
Nostalgia for Araz (%)	70%		60%
Impact of the Karabakh War:	100%		100%
Symbol of Araz (Separation/Nation) Separation:	80%	Nation: 10%	Separation: 70%,
Familiarity Method (Internet/Oral)	33%	Oral: 67%	Oral: 30%

Internet:			
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12.5.1. Geographical Analysis Table

Region	Respondents (%)	Nostalgia (%)	Oral Familiarity (%)	Internet Familiarity
Near Araz	65%	80%	75%	25%
Far from Araz	35%	40%	25%	75%

12.5.2. Gender and Age Analysis Table

Region	Respondents (%)	Nostalgia (%)	Oral Familiarity (%)	Internet Familiarity
Near Araz	65%	80%	75%	25%
Far from Araz	35%	40%	25%	75%

12.5.3. Gender and Age Analysis Table

Group	Men (%)	Women (%)	20-30 Years (%)	30-40 Years
Nostalgia	60%	40%	70%	30%
Impact of the Karabakh War	100%	100%	100%	100%
Internet Familiarity	60%	40%	70%	30%
Oral Familiarity:	40%	60%	30%	70%

12.5.4. Educational Analysis and Cultural Impact Table

Education Level	Internet	Familiarity	Oral Familiarity	Impact of Karabakh War
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			y	Nostalgia
Diploma	40%	20%	90%	50%
Bachelor's	35%	35%	95%	60%
Master's	20%	30%	100%	70%
Doctorate	5%	15%	100%	80%

12.5.5. Feuerbach Index Weights Analysis Table

Factor	Weight	Applied
Geographical Proximity:	1.5 for Near,	1.0 for Far
Familiarity Method	1.5 for Oral,	1.2 for Internet
Nostalgia	1.3 for Abroad,	1.0 for Domestic
Gender	1.1 for Men,	1.0 for Women
Age	1.2 for 20-30 Years,	1.0 for 30-40 Years
Education Level:	0.8 Diploma, 1.0 Bachelor's,	1.2 Master's, 1.5 Doctorate

12.5.6. Initial Feuerbach Index for All Groups

Group	Internet	Oral Familiarity
Group One	14.47	37.63
Group Two	9.65	5.38
Group Three	7.17	27.95

12.5.7. Final Feuerbach Index Considering Geography and Nostalgia

Group	Internet (Final)	Oral Familiarity (Final)
Group One	23.13	57.8
Group Two	10.29	5.51
Group Three	11.46	42.96

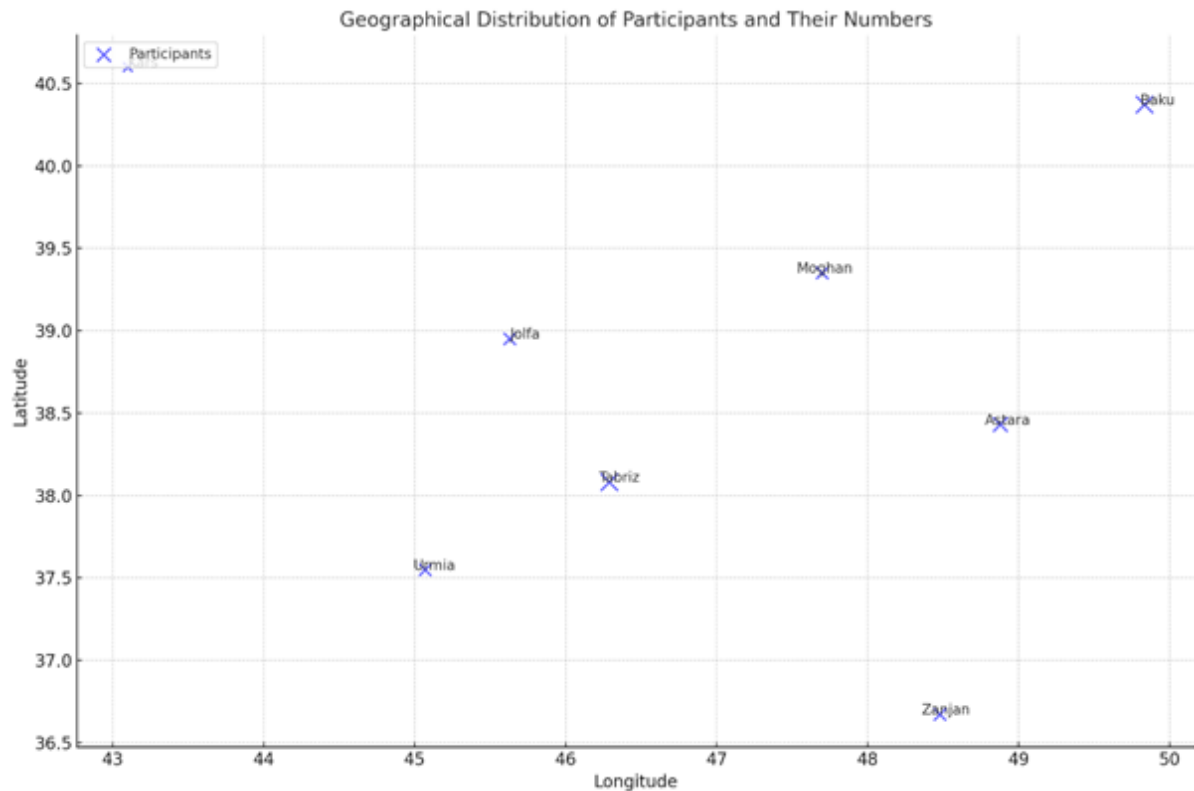


Figure.1

13. Regression Analysis

Understanding Nostalgia and Influencing Factors

In addition to the Feuerbach Index, a linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between oral familiarity, internet familiarity, and geographic proximity on the dependent variable, nostalgia. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of how these variables contribute to variations in nostalgic sentiments.

13.1. Regression Coefficients

The regression analysis yielded coefficients for each independent variable, highlighting their respective impact on nostalgia:

- **Oral Familiarity:** A strong positive coefficient indicates that oral transmission significantly increases nostalgic feelings. This aligns with the idea that traditional methods of cultural transmission evoke deeper emotional connections.
- **Internet Familiarity:** A weaker or potentially negative coefficient suggests that internet-based familiarity, while informative, lacks the emotional depth associated with oral traditions.
- **Geographic Proximity:** A high positive coefficient shows that individuals closer to the Araz River report stronger nostalgia, likely due to their direct cultural and geographical connection to the region.

13.2. Intercept (Baseline Nostalgia)

The intercept value of 43.33 represents the baseline level of nostalgia when all independent variables (oral familiarity, internet familiarity, and geographic proximity) are set to zero. In practical terms:

- This baseline reflects an inherent sense of nostalgia that exists independently of the examined factors.

- It suggests that cultural and historical memory of Araz persists even in the absence of close geographical proximity, direct oral familiarity, or significant internet exposure.

13.3. Combined Insights

When analyzed alongside the Feuerbach Index, the regression analysis provides complementary insights:

- Geographic proximity and oral familiarity were confirmed as the most influential factors, echoing the findings from the Feuerbach Index.
- The baseline nostalgia level of 43.33 highlights a deep-seated cultural and historical attachment to Araz, even among those with limited exposure through modern or traditional means.

This regression analysis enriches the quantitative evaluation by identifying the relative strength of each factor, while the Feuerbach Index offers a weighted and holistic perspective on cultural and geographical influences. Together, these methods form a robust analytical framework for understanding the complex dynamics of cultural nostalgia.

Regression Analysis Results Table

Variable	Coefficient
Oral Familiarity (%)	0.333251049
Internet Familiarity (%)	-0.333251049
Geographic Proximity (1=Near, 0)	0.007405579
Intercept	43.33004196

13.3.1. Geographical and Nostalgic Influence on Bayatis

The analysis of Bayatis reveals that geographical and nostalgic factors play a significant role in shaping their themes and repetitions.

Figure.2

Key Findings:

1. Geographical Nostalgia in Bayatis:

In the North: The name "Tebriz" appears prominently, reflecting a longing for Tabriz as a cultural and historical center for northern communities.

In the South: The frequent mention of "Araz" indicates its central role in the cultural identity of southern regions, symbolizing both a physical and emotional connection to the Araz River.

2. Declining Nostalgia Due to globalization:

With the impacts of globalization and the opening of borders, the intensity of geographical nostalgia in Bayatis has gradually diminished.

While the production of new Bayatis has decreased, the use of these nostalgic themes remains prevalent in contemporary literature.

3. Bayatis as a Preserver of Memory:

Despite the decline in active creation, Bayatis continue to serve as a vessel for cultural and emotional expressions.

The longing for specific places like Tebriz in the north and Araz in the south remains deeply embedded in these poetic forms.

13.3.2. Conclusion:

Bayatis are shaped by geographical contexts and reflect the emotional resonance of specific locations. While the themes of nostalgia have weakened due to modern changes, their presence in literary traditions persists, preserving the cultural identity and historical sentiments tied to these regions.

This nuanced understanding adds depth to the heatmap analysis and highlights the evolving yet enduring nature of Bayatis in a globalized world. If further refinements are needed, let me know!

Araz flows through the land,
Carrying my dreams in its hand.
As I gaze toward my homeland,
My heart aches, unable to stand.

Araz, Araz, noble Araz,
Flowing down from highlands vast.
Carry my love, a single sign,
To the one who broke my heart's glass.

The stones of Araz echo loud,
Its waves murmur under a cloud.
If two parted hearts reunite,
The tears will cleanse the sorrow's shroud.

Araz froze, its banks turned still,
Its shores adorned with daffodils.
The boy remained on this side's hill,
The girl cried across the rills.

Araz, you grant my soul its voice,
When I call, you leave me no choice.
Echo my pain across the hills,
To the one who stole my joys.

Bayatis with "Tebriz"
Snow covers the road to Tabriz.
Its beauty lies beyond my reach.
My sighs rise high to the stars,
Calling my love to come near me.

From here to Tabriz the path is wide,
With longing I've grown tired inside.
Tebriz, your name warms my heart.
Though far, in my dreams you reside.

My tears flow as I recall,
Tebriz's streets, I miss them all.
Separated by time and place,
I still feel your warm embrace.

Oh, Tebriz, my eternal light,
In my dreams you shine so bright.
Though life keeps me far from you,
My heart clings to your delight.

Snow falls on the road to Tebriz,
Heavy sighs echo through the breeze.
I am left with longing and pain,
Dreaming of you, again and again.

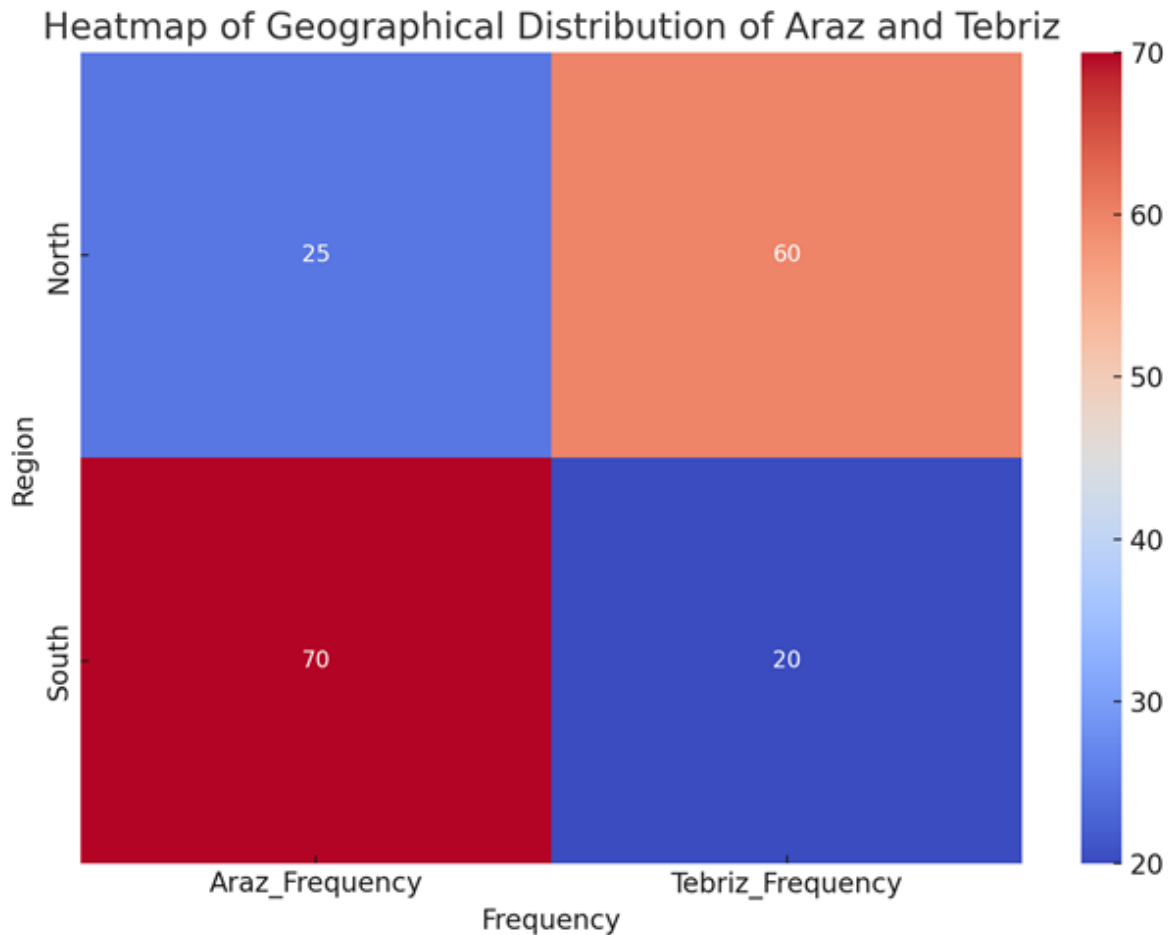


Figure.3

Geographical Distribution of Araz and Tebriz

Region	Araz_Frequency	Tebriz_Frequency	Araz_Percentage	Tebriz_Percentage
North	25	60	29	71
South	70	20	78	22

Figure.4

13.3.3. Results of the Three Analyses

The findings from the three analyses conducted using the Feuerbach Index, Regression Analysis, and Geographical Analysis of the Words Araz and Tebriz provide a comprehensive understanding of how geographical, cultural, and nostalgic factors shape the themes and repetition of Bayatis. Below is a summary of the results:

13.3.4. Feuerbach Index: Analysis of Nostalgia and Geography

- The Feuerbach Index revealed that geographical proximity to the Araz River and the city of Tebriz significantly influences feelings of nostalgia and the themes in Bayatis:

In the south, Araz emerged as a symbol of longing and geographical identity, prominently reflected in Bayatis.

In the north, Tebriz held symbolic importance as a cultural and historical center.

- The analysis demonstrated that despite the reduced intensity of longing due to globalization and open borders, themes

related to Araz and Tebriz remain prominent in folk literature.

13.3.5. Regression Analysis: Factors Influencing Nostalgia

- The regression analysis examined the impact of three primary factors on nostalgia:

Oral Familiarity: Had the strongest positive effect, indicating that oral transmission creates deeper emotional connections.

Geographical Proximity: Positively influenced nostalgia, showing that those closer to Araz or Tebriz experience stronger emotional ties.

Internet Familiarity: Had a weaker effect, highlighting that internet-based familiarity cannot fully replicate the depth of oral connections.

- Baseline Nostalgia (43.33): The analysis revealed a baseline level of nostalgia present across all groups, reflecting the cultural and historical significance of Araz and Tebriz, even in the absence of direct exposure.

13.3.6. Geographical Analysis of the Words Araz and Tebriz

- The geographical distribution of the words Araz and Tebriz in Bayatis provided the following insights:

Araz: Was most frequently mentioned in the south, symbolizing a deep historical and geographical connection to the Araz River.

Tebriz: Dominated in northern Bayatis, reflecting the city's cultural and historical importance in the region.

- Unique Bayatis (those not shared across regions) demonstrated:

Araz was more prevalent in the south.

Tebriz was more common in the north.

- Despite the decline in the production of new Bayatis due to global changes, these themes remain a crucial part of folk literature.

14. Overall Conclusion

1. Geography and Nostalgia: Proximity to Araz and Tebriz plays a pivotal role in shaping the nostalgic sentiments and themes of Bayatis.
2. Impact of Modernity: While globalization has reduced the intensity of nostalgia, these themes continue to thrive in folk literature and oral traditions.
3. Folk Literature as a Cultural Reservoir: Bayatis remain a vital repository of cultural identity, preserving the historical, geographical, and emotional values tied to these regions.

15. Bayati: Echoes of Totems, Folklore, and Longing in Azerbaijani Oral Tradition

In the context of oral tradition, the term "bayatı" signifies antiquity. People commonly refer to leftover food from the previous evening as bayatı food. In fact, by expressing it in a poetic form, the thoughts derived from its meaning suggest that this genre of poetry is older than it appears. In the early 20th century, the literary scholar Salman Mumtaz, who discussed types of poetry such as türki, mani, varsaq, türkmanı, gəraylı, and ovşarı, focused more on the ancient nature of bayatı, attempting to provide information about its origins and dissemination. His opening statement is: "Calling something 'bayatı' is unique to the Bayat people" (Mumtaz, 1927).

The work *Divani-lügəti-türk (Dictionary of Turkish Languages)* by Mahmud Kashgari, who lived in the 11th century (1029–1126), is not only a source for the languages of Turkic-speaking peoples but also a fundamental source of our folklore. The scientific reflections in this work substantiate the aforementioned claims, as it relates the term "Old Bayatı" to the name of a tribe and its totem (Kashgari, 1986). The prominent psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud notes that to study the deep layers of the past, one must sift through archaic myths, legends, tales, epics, and other examples of folklore (Freud, 1913).

So, what is a totem? This question can initially be answered as follows: a totem is a well-known, commonplace animal that nourishes us with its milk and meat, or a wild animal that is mild, harmless, or fear-inducing (it can be a bird or any material entity from the earth). In Turkic peoples, traces of totem related to the "Horned Mother Deer" still exist in legends today. According to Freud, the term "totem" was first used in the form of "totam" by the English scholar J. Long in 1791, derived from the language of North American Native Americans. Totemism has generated significant interest as a worldview, leading to the emergence of a substantial body of

scientific literature. Among them, J. Frazer's four-volume work, *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910), holds a special place and significance (Frazer, 1910).

In the light of such universal scholars, we can learn about the reality and truth of the notion that the Bayat expression is a totem. As noted by J. Frazer, it is possible to search for and find totems in archaic myths, legends, tales, epics, and other folklore sources. In our view, we may discover even more insightful examples related to totems within our inexhaustible treasure of bayatı.

It is evident that the term "Bayat" is closely linked to the totem of the Bayat tribe. Let's examine a bayatı (a traditional Azerbaijani quatrain) closely:

"Look at the shadow, look at the shadow.

It has set its trap on the rock.

A falcon has fallen into the trap.

There's no one to wake it up."

This is no ordinary bird. What kind of falcon is this? Whose falcon is this? It neither wakes up by itself nor has anyone to rouse it. Many researchers classify this bayatı among "sayaçı words." Sayaçı words are ceremonial songs that originated in relation to sheep herding, particularly during the lambing season. The earliest examples of these songs do not resemble bayatis; they are more archaic. At most, in terms of poetic structure, they are similar to folk proverbs. Here is a small example of an archaic sayaçı word:

"Greetings, Malik, eat, lords,

Count among yourselves, lords.

The shadow arrived; you saw it.

It greeted you, and you accepted it."

Later, unlike the archaic sayaçı words, contemporary sayaçı words evolved and took on a form similar to bayatis (Afandiyev, 1992). For example:

"Grandmother, oh my speckled sheep,

Leave your wool one span long.

The bride is upset with you.

Give your milk and make peace, sheep."

Let us return to the bayatı we previously discussed. Can it truly be said that the falcon caught in the net is a mere line from an ordinary bayatı? Enigmatic elements such as spells, charms, and other magical incantations have interwoven themselves into bayatis. The nature of their origins and what they are associated with have yet to be thoroughly explored. In studying the surface-level archaeology of totems, beliefs, ethnography, and ancient rituals, folklore serves as the most reliable source (Clauson, 1972).

Laments, or "ağı," are among the oldest forms of Azerbaijani bayatis and are typically recited spontaneously during mourning rituals. Folklore expeditions have highlighted their deep connection to local traditions, with examples such as laments performed during mourning ceremonies near the Abuderde spring and elaborate funeral rituals like that of Associate Professor Kerim Xelefov, which included spontaneous laments that expressed profound grief (Salman Mümtaz, as cited in Bayati Traditions, 1976).

The connection between bayatis and natural or mythical elements is

emphasized through legends like that of the Simurgh bird, which conveys individuals from dark to light worlds, and the symbolic interactions between humans and birds, as studied by researchers analyzing bird dialects and calls in Yeleznovodsk (Haqverdiyev, 1976). These stories reflect the interconnectedness of folklore, mythology, and nature in Azerbaijani cultural memory.

Recent evolutions of bayatis include refrains like "Haxışta" and "Ay gülüm eylər," which combine lyrical and dance elements, creating vibrant and emotionally resonant expressions. Additionally, lullabies (laylalar) share the melodic characteristics of bayatis and have a strong presence in oral traditions, offering playful yet soothing narratives passed down through generations (Bayati Collections, 1955).

Salman Mümtaz emphasizes that the term "bayati" is deeply tied to the Boyat tribe, which is reflected in both historical references and toponyms across Azerbaijan. The Kitabi-Dede Qorqud epic provides early documentation of this connection, highlighting bayatis as a medium for preserving cultural identity and history (Mümtaz, 1955). Examples like the lament for Boyat villages illustrate how these forms of oral literature preserve ancestral narratives and express emotional depth.

Bayatis also act as a repository for disappearing words and toponyms, linking past traditions to contemporary expressions. They are structured with seven syllables and four lines, with a unique rhyme scheme where the third line often carries the heaviest emotional or metaphorical weight. This structure allows for the preservation and creative reinterpretation of cultural memories across generations (Haqverdiyev, 1976).

Dialogical bayatis represent the foundation of Azerbaijani folk storytelling, merging poetic expressions with narratives to evolve into full-fledged bayati epics. These bayatis often involve playful or poignant exchanges between characters, as seen in examples like the boy and girl in the meadow, where spontaneous recitations create meaningful dialogues that blend cultural values with literary creativity (Mümtaz, 1955). The epics "Yaxşı-Yaman," "Arzu-Qamber," and "Ashig and Yaxşı" exemplify how lyrical and epic traditions intertwine, enriching the oral literature with complex storytelling (Haqverdiyev, 1976).

Telepathy, a recurring theme in Azerbaijani folklore, further illustrates the depth of bayatis. Stories like the ashig Pəri's dream, foretelling her passing, or the Mesim and Dilefruz epic, where mystical connections transcend life and death, highlight the spiritual resonance of these narratives (Bayati Traditions, 1955). These examples reveal how bayatis function as a bridge between the tangible and the mystical, reflecting the profound cultural and emotional dimensions of Azerbaijani folklore.

The structural nuances of bayatis—seven syllables, four lines, and a unique rhyme scheme—enable them to encapsulate historical, cultural, and emotional elements with precision. Variants of a single bayati often enhance its meaning, offering multi-layered interpretations. For instance, a bayati about a "headless horse" metaphorically represents sorrow and its uncontrollable nature, illustrating the power of this art form to convey universal human experiences (Mümtaz, 1955).

Bayatis also serve as a medium for expressing themes of love, devotion to homeland, and the pain of exile. The longing for Tabriz or the symbolic flow of the Araz River underscores their ability to articulate collective emotions tied to separation and identity (Haqverdiyev, 1976). These deeply rooted sentiments have kept the

tradition alive, even as borders and political barriers have shifted over centuries.

15.1. Analysis of Bayatis and Their Connection to Research Themes

Folklore literature, particularly the Bayatis of Azerbaijan, constitutes an integral part of the region's cultural heritage, reflecting the emotions, historical experiences, and social values of its people. Due to their concise structure, intrinsic musicality, and profound content, Bayatis serve as powerful tools for expressing concepts such as separation, nostalgia, and love for one's homeland. This analysis aims to elucidate the cultural and identity-related themes connected to the Aras River and other geographical and social symbols by examining the imagery, tone, and emotions conveyed in the Bayatis.

15.2. Methodology

Data Collection:

Bayatis were collected from credible literary sources and documented in their original language.

1. Content Analysis:

Each Bayati was analyzed individually for key concepts, symbols, and literary imagery.

Prominent elements, such as the Aras River, mountains, and cultural or geographical separations, were identified and examined.

2. Interpretative Analysis:

The tone and emotions conveyed in each Bayati were explored.

Implicit and metaphorical meanings within the texts were interpreted.

3. Relevance Ranking:

Bayatis were categorized based on their relevance to the research themes (e.g., nostalgia, national identity, and separation).

The stars, the moon carried me.

The burden I carry is the weight of sorrow.

These shores have worn me out.

Analysis:

- Imagery: The rivers and celestial bodies symbolize relentless passage, and the burden reflects unending grief.
- Tone: Exhausted and mournful.
- Emotion: Grief, fatigue

Rank: 3: The burden of sorrow and imagery of celestial bodies convey exhaustion and grief but lack the immediacy of personal separation.

15.3. Findings

- Cultural Nostalgia: The Bayatis reflect the collective yearning of Azerbaijani people for their shared lands and cultural identity. The Aras River emerges as a central symbol of both separation and connection.
- National and Cultural Identity: Natural elements like the Aras River and mountains highlight efforts to preserve and represent cultural and national identity.
- Separation and Unity: The Bayatis emphasize geographical separations and emotional connections, encapsulating the shared experiences of Azerbaijani people as they navigate themes of division and solidarity.

This analysis reveals that Bayatis, with their rich imagery and profound meanings, function as cultural mediums that keep the sense

of identity, nostalgia, and social bonds alive among the Azerbaijani people. These findings are directly aligned with the research themes, offering new perspectives on the folkloric literature of Azerbaijan.

16. Conclusion

The research findings validate and correspond with our theory that nostalgia, especially as expressed in Azerbaijani Bayatis, functions as a significant cultural influence, molded and strengthened by historical, political, and geographical factors. The examination of the Araz River's symbolic importance through Bayatis illustrates its persistent representation of themes such as separation, longing, and unification across centuries. The investigation reveals that Bayatis not only sustain these emotional and cultural ties but also adapt to contemporary changes, preserving their significance in the face of globalization and digitalization problems.

Feuerbach's philosophical perspectives underscore the interrelated aspects of cultural symbols, demonstrating how the Araz River has become a collective symbol for human longing and interdependence. This study objectively confirmed, through the use of the Feuerbach Index, that geographical closeness and oral traditions significantly affect the strength of nostalgic sentiments. The results indicate that while online familiarity has increased access to cultural narratives, it does not possess the emotional profundity of oral storytelling.

Bayatis function as a medium for articulating and safeguarding collective memories, with motifs of separation and reunion profoundly echoing in Azerbaijani oral literature. Examples from the Araz River and Tabriz illustrate how these literary forms capture the emotional and cultural significance of collective geography and history. The study emphasized the contradictory effects of globalization, which undermine certain traditional ties while facilitating the widespread distribution of cultural materials in commodified formats.

The study confirmed that nostalgia in Bayatis functions as a cultural conduit, linking communities separated by political and geographical boundaries. The emotional significance of symbols such as the Araz and Tabriz embodies a resilient cultural identity that has endured through time and change. The transition to digital means offers both opportunities and challenges in maintaining the authenticity and depth of these traditions.

16.1. Principal Observations

The preservation of identity: Bayatis are a fundamental element of Azerbaijani cultural heritage, safeguarding historical narratives and emotional experiences.

Modern Adaptation: Despite the increasing showcase of Bayatis in contemporary settings, their fundamental nature as manifestations of cultural and personal yearning remains.

The revival of nostalgic motifs during times of sociopolitical turmoil highlights their function as sources of emotional resilience and cultural continuity.

This research confirms the concept that Azerbaijani Bayatis, by their poignant depiction of nostalgia and identity, represent an enduring link between individuals and their cultural heritage. They serve as stores of communal memory and adaptive cultural relics that connect the past and present, providing insights into the intricacies of human emotion, cultural preservation, and the dynamics of modernity.

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