

Though, most of the residents are still able to think quite clearly, one day during the last week of July I had an interesting and emotional conversation with one of the residents of the department where I work. His name was J. Slagboom. He told me that he applied for euthanasia. We talked about some of the reasons why he had done so. He told me stories about his childhood in Friesland and how he spent his days there. He always loved to take long walks through the endless green fields. He worked at a farm and his days were long. He woke up early in the morning and his day did not end until late in the evening. He was a man who was always busy and was never standing still. He did not have a complicated life. He liked the regularities and the simplicity in his days. Unfortunately, old age and physical difficulties caught up with him. He is not able to take those long walks anymore and he ended up in a nursing home in Zaandijk. He longs to go back to those green fields and the times where he was still able to take long walks. At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but it is actually a yearning for a different time, a former time in one's life. A lot has changed in the world since the residents at my work were younger. Did these rapid changes increase their longing to the more quiet and simpler times?

During the beginning of 2020, I had to read an essay for my philosophy class, called *Nostalgia and its Discontents* by the writer and professor of Slavic and Comparative Literatures called Svetlana Boym. This text, together with my experience of working in a nursing home, made me want to know more about nostalgia. What exactly is nostalgia? Is the nostalgia that we experience in Europe today different from the nostalgia that is experienced hundreds of years ago? The answers to these questions are the foundation of this thesis. We live in a time where technological advances and

globalisation are a fact. Does technological progress and global culture cure nostalgia, or does this increase our longing for the slower rhythms of the past and encourage this stronger attachment to local tradition? I collected all of the above-mentioned questions, and formulated them into the following research question:

*How did nostalgia's meaning develop from the coined moment of the terminology, and how has this concept been experienced in Europe since the 2000's (with special focus on the period from 2010-2020) in comparison to the 17th century?*

In order to answer this question, I have divided my thesis into chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the history of nostalgia. From the 17th century, when nostalgia was seen as a curable disease, to the mid-nineteenth century, when nostalgia became institutionalized in national and provincial museums, historical centres, heritage foundations, and memorials. The past was until that moment no longer unknown or unknowable. The past became "heritage". Further I will also shine a light on the start of Romanticism and how nostalgia emerged during that time. In the second chapter I will dive more into the technology that once promised to bridge modern displacement and distance and provide a miracle cure for nostalgic soreness. On the contrary, technology became much faster than nostalgic longing. If we claim that progress did not cure nostalgia; did it increase it instead? In the final chapter I will look at nostalgia as seen from two different points of view: the positive view on nostalgia; how it directly stimulates creativity. And a more negative view on nostalgia: how it represents a personal insufficiency and an unaffordable luxury as such.