

German
Historical
Institute
London

Nostalgia

Historicising the Longing for the Past



German Historical Institute London | 1-3 October 2015

Contents

Programme	3
Abstracts	6
Biographies	16
Participants	23
German Historical Institute	25

Programme

Thursday, 1 October 2015

- 13:00** **Registration**
- 13:15-13:45** **Welcome and Introduction**
ANDREAS GESTRICH (London), TOBIAS BECKER (London)
- 13:45-15:00** **Keynote I**
Chair: ANDREAS GESTRICH

CONSTANTINE SEDIKIDES (Southampton), Back to the Future: Nostalgia Fosters Optimism, Inspiration, and Creativity
- 15:00-17:00** **Panel I: Theorising Nostalgia**
Chair: FERNANDO ESPOSITO (Tübingen)

ACHIM SAUPE (Potsdam), “Good old things”: Nostalgia and the discourse of historical authenticity

ISHAY LANDA (Ra’anana), The Nostalgia for Pain: Examining a Modern Trope

ROGÉRIO MIGUEL PUGA (Lisbon), The Myth of Saudade in Portuguese-speaking Countries: Art, Lusophone Self-Stereotypes, and (Psychological) ‘National Traits’
- 17:00-17:30** **Coffee Break**
- 17:30-19:00** **Keynote 2**
Chair: MICHAEL SCHAICH (London)

ACHIM LANDWEHR (Düsseldorf), Nostalgia and the Turbulence of Times
- 19:30** **Dinner (optional)**
Tas Restaurant (22 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QJ)

Friday, 2 October

9:30-11:00 **Panel 2: Political Nostalgia**

Chair: ESRA ÖZYÜREK (London)

PATRICIA LORCIN (Minneapolis), Memory and Nostalgia in the Post-Colonial Context

MANCA G. RENKO (Koper), Habsburg Nostalgia

11:00-11:15 **Coffee Break**

11:15-13:00 TORBEN PHILIPP (Berlin), Affective Memory in State Socialism: Nostalgic Explorations of the past during the Era of Stagnation

OWEN MOLLOY (Norwich), Nostalgia for West Germany: Rationalising the Emergence of Westalgie

13:00-14:00 **Lunch Break**

14:00-16:00 **Panel 3: Industrial Nostalgia**

Chair: LUTZ RAPHAEL (Trier)

JÖRG ARNOLD (Nottingham), The Future that Never Came: De-Industrialisation, Nostalgia and the Politics of Temporality

TIM STRANGLEMAN (Canterbury), Smokestack Nostalgia? The Work of Memory in Understanding Industrial Decline

PETER F. N. HÖRZ (Göttingen), Processions Towards Railway History — On Rusty Tracks

16:00-16:30 **Coffee Break**

16:30-18:30 **Panel 5: Media Nostalgia**

Chair: AMY HOLDSWORTH (University of Glasgow)

KATHARINA NIEMEYER (Paris), Amateur Nostalgia on the Web: Remixing Vintage Media Technologies and Content

DOMINIK SCHREY (Karlsruhe), Forgotten Theories of Nostalgia: Prolegomena to an Alternate Cultural History of the Concept

GINTARE MALINAUSKAITE (Berlin), Vilne Nostalgia in New York: Visual Memories of the Lithuanian Jews after the Shoah

19:00-21:00 **Conference Dinner** (German Historical Institute, Library)

Saturday, 3 October

9:30-11:30 **Panel 4: Object Nostalgia**

Chair: LEN PLATT (London)

REINHILD KREIS (Mannheim/Wien), Mixed feelings. Do it yourself, nostalgia, and social reform in 20th century Germany

EVA C. HEESEN (Hannover), Nostalgia as Escapism: An Invaluable Tool for Museums

KERSTIN STAMM (Bonn/Berlin), Future Shock? European Heritage Conservation and Nostalgia for the Past in the 1970s

KARL B. MURR (Augsburg/München), The Function of Nostalgia in Jean Baudrillard's *System of Objects*

11:30-12:00 **Coffee Break**

12:00-13:30 **Comment and general discussion**

Chair: TOBIAS BECKER

Comment by DAVID LOWENTHAL (London)

Abstracts

Constantine Sedikides

Back to the Future: Nostalgia Fosters Optimism, Inspiration, and Creativity

Nostalgia is defined as a sentimental longing for one's past. Nostalgia increases social connectedness (a sense of belongingness and acceptance) and self-esteem (a sense of self-positivity). In addition, nostalgia bolsters an approach (rather than avoidance) orientation, including openness to

experience. Through social connectedness and self-esteem, nostalgia fosters optimism and inspiration. Through openness to experience, nostalgia fosters creativity. Nostalgia is considered a backward-looking emotion, but it has forward-looking implications.

Achim Saupe

“Good old things”: Nostalgia and the Discourse of Historical Authenticity

Today, attitudes to the past are characterised by an intense striving for historical authenticity, which seems to be an important parallel to the discourse on nostalgia. Both phenomena began to assume new potency in the last third of the twentieth century as modern societies started to vacillate between preserving and forgetting the past. In practical terms this search for historical authenticity manifests itself, for example, in the value attached to “authentic objects” in museums, collections and archives or to “authentic places” – be they historic buildings, urban architectural ensembles or memorial sites – as apparently direct embodiments of history. This desire for historical authenticity and past “reality” goes hand in hand with an attachment to “tradition” and a longing to experience history “first hand” – evident in the degree of public attention given to surviving witnesses of historic events, in the frequent screenings of historical documentaries and period films or in historical re-enactments. Ultimately, this is all bound up with a desire for things regarded as “genuine”, with a wish to reconstruct and preserve the “true” and “original”.

These observations form the starting point of the work of a Leibniz Research Alliance on Historical Authenticity (www.leibniz-historische-authentizitaet.de), which I coordinate. The research alliance is examining how the discourse on

authenticity has changed over the centuries, how museums identify, (de)construct and communicate authenticity, and which role claims to authenticity play in constructions of space as well as in political conflicts and power relationships.

In my presentation I will firstly focus on the relationship between the nostalgia phenomenon and the rise of the discourse on authenticity since the 1960s. While the struggle for authenticity in the 1970s was deeply related to the politics of new social movements, in the 1980s and 1990s the concept was commercialised. Therefore, secondly, I investigate marketing, brand management and the selling of “authentic” and “nostalgic” products. I will give an insight into economic theories on the construction of “authenticity” in brand identities and the role that history and narratives about a company's past play in commerce. My examples will include the “Nostalgiefirma Manufactum” (Der Spiegel) with its slogan “The good things in life still exist.” (“Es gibt sie noch, die guten Dinge.”) which was founded in 1988 by the former executive secretary of the Green Party of Nordrhein-Westphalia, Thomas Hoof; the US clothing manufacturer Woolrich, which draws upon its own long history in the marketing of its products; and Pashley Bikes, England's longest established manufacturer of hand-built bicycles.

Ishay Landa

The Nostalgia for Pain: Examining a Modern Trope

A particular brand of nostalgic outlook accompanying the consolidation of modern Western civilization revolves around the notion that modernity is severely lacking in the experience of pain, struggle, strife and heroism. Modernity is associated with the progressive taming of the human animal, and an attainment of a nearly universal condition of mild satisfaction. Yet according to many critics of modernity such contentment comes at great cost: 'the civilizational process', to use Norbert Elias' term, far from representing an undiluted boon, signifies the dwarfing of humanity, a social and economic leveling down, the formation of a bourgeois society, at first, and then a fully fledged mass society. Political and social institutions, such as democracy and the welfare state, along with the vast improvements in nourishment, medicine and hygiene, may have made life safer and more comfortable for average people, but they have simultaneously drained life of the elements that make it truly worthwhile: risk, adventure, battle. The locus classicus of such a trope is Friedrich

Nietzsche's critique of the mass society at the heart of which stands 'the most contemptible man: and that is the last man': a dreary, middling, squeamish herd animal, living a long but meaningless life. And in that context pain assumes an unexpected redeeming role, as an enlivening spur amidst a deadened monotony. Remembering pain and re-living pain, thus suggest themselves as antidotes, recommended by many writers as a way of reconnecting with the tragic and heroic bedrock of existence. In this paper I will trace the evolution of this nostalgia for a past in which pain was still integral to everyday life, through some of its most eloquent spokespeople, among them Ernst Jünger, Aldous Huxley, Julius Evola, Georges Bataille, or Slavoj Žižek; I will interpret the role it has played during crucial historical episodes and crises of the last 150 years, notably the two World Wars and the rise of European fascism; finally, I will demonstrate the abiding relevance of this trope in our own times, by casting a glance at some trends in current popular culture.

Rogério Miguel Puga

The Myth of Saudade in Portuguese-speaking Countries: Art, Lusophone Self-Stereotypes, and (Psychological) 'National Traits'

In Galicia (Spain), and in Portuguese-speaking countries and regions such as Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, and Macao, the (psychological) theme of *saudade* — a deep emotional state of nostalgic or melancholic longing for an absent something/someone/period — has evolved and has been textualized and painted since the 13th century. In the early 20th century, a new literary movement appeared in Portugal, named Saudosismo, from *saudade*, a word and psychological trait that *vox populi* in Lusophone (Portuguese speaking) regions still claims that cannot be

translated, as it is a specific Lusophone and Galician concept-feeling. The same claim, regarding a similar word, is also heard in Wales and in Russia. This paper analyses the ideological myth-building around the national(istic) concept of *saudade* in Lusophone literature, painting and contemporary music [Cesária Évora (Cape Verde), Gal Costa, Caetano Veloso (Brazil), Portuguese Fado], especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as its relations to the Portuguese empire and to migration fluxes.

Achim Landwehr

Nostalgia and the Turbulence of Times

Nostalgia can, with some justification, be called a child of modernity: at precisely the moment when the early enlightenment was preparing mankind's emergence from its self-imposed immaturity, that is,

in the late seventeenth century, nostalgia, both as a term and as a diagnosis, saw the light of day. Initially conceived of as a spatial phenomenon, 'home-sickness', it soon acquired a temporal quality.

In the medical discourse of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it figured as a variant of melancholy. In its early stages, 'nostalgia' was a psychological illness, before the term was used to describe an emotional melange combining loss and recovery: the vanishing of past times was to be prevented by nostalgic practices. Yet for nostalgia to make sense, it was absolutely necessary for these past times to vanish. Looking at nostalgia's early days could show that it did not originate in the late seventeenth century by chance; that, if historicisation and temporalisation are seen as symptoms of 'modernity', the loss of a historical

home (because of temporal distancing) could pose a real problem. The question is how to classify phenomena which fostered a yearning for earlier times long before the seventeenth century (the Renaissance and Reformation being the obvious examples). If we take off the glasses of modernity theory, it is possible to argue firstly, that the emergence of nostalgia in the seventeenth century was caused by other 'temporal turbulences'; secondly, that nostalgia is not as modern as it pretends to be; and thirdly, that nostalgia offers a chance to think differently about history and historicisation.

Patricia Lorcin

Memory and Nostalgia in the Post-Colonial Context

In my monograph *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia* and a number of subsequent articles, I argued that there is a difference between colonial and imperial nostalgia; the former being linked to a loss of socio-economic standing and the latter to the loss of hegemonic influence in international power politics. The focus of my research was based on what I saw as the nostalgia of the colonial/imperial powers. In a recent e-mail exchange with an overseas student, I was asked whether colonial and imperial nostalgia could also be applied to the sentiments of the former colonized peoples. William Bissell has written about the colonial nostalgia of the former colonized in Zanzibar but is it possible to distinguish between colonial and imperial nostalgia in the same way in post-colonial societies? This got me thinking in a new direction, a direction that will be the subject of my presentation.

With a focus on post-colonial society in France and Britain, I shall explore the way in which historical nostalgia is constructed and historicized and highlight the way in which it differs from historical memory. The questions that will frame my presentation will be as follows: Is colonial or imperial nostalgia merely a knee-jerk reaction to troubled socio-economic or political times, or is it grounded in the way a society constructs its received ideas about the past? To what extent is historical nostalgia an individual phenomenon or a collective one imposed by politicians and/or the media? Is it possible to apply Maurice Halbwachs' ideas about collective memory to nostalgia? If so, what does that signify in theorizing memory or nostalgia? In short, this will essentially be a theoretical presentation with the aim of stimulating debate on the differences between nostalgia and memory in a historical context.

Manca G. Renko

Habsburg Nostalgia

If nostalgia for the Habsburg monarchy was until recently reserved for admirers of the past, biased historians and fans of (auto)biographies of Central European artists and intellectuals from the turn of the previous century, the last two years have seen a marked rise in the number of worshippers of 'the world of yesterday'. This is in part due to two of the most popular names in modern American art: Jonathan Franzen and Wes Anderson. In his commented bilingual translation of two essays by

fin de siècle Viennese satirist Karl Kraus, the former presents a comparison of the years 1913 and 2013 as well as personal and general history, entirely in footnotes. In *Grand Budapest Hotel*, the latter created a perfect cinematic homage to Stefan Zweig, the central and most famous chronicle of the 'golden age of security'. The forgotten world of the dual monarchy thus penetrated popular culture just before the centenary of the First World War. Such a stylised representation of history has

affected new perceptions of the past and created a new type of *nostalgia*: if the majority of descendants of non-German and non-Hungarian inhabitants of the Habsburg monarchy learnt about the prison of nations that ruptured from tension and sparked the Great War, more and more people consider the dual monarchy a predecessor of modern, cosmopolitan Europe. Often, this nostalgia stems from the aesthetic-cultural basis of the former state, although times of economic and political crisis have led to other forms of idealising that aspire to historical affiliation to the (wealthy, powerful, European) West (e.g. Ukrainian Lviv in former Habsburg Galicia, with fresh representations of Francis Joseph).

Yet looking deeper at Austrian nostalgia, one discovers that its beginnings lie in the end of the 19th century, when leading Austrian artists in the

times of flourishing nationalism (and modernity) questioned what defines their homeland, what actually is Austrian, and what role the multinational monarchy plays. The texts, notes and correspondences of Austro-Hungarian artists and intellectuals from the turn of the century (e.g. Herman Bahr, Leopold von Andrian, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Anton Wildgans...) bear witness to attempts to come up with that which would give their time and space validity – both in (their) present as well as future.

The research will attempt to track *Habsburg nostalgia*, which arose from a myth constructed at the end of the 19th century, and follow it through the turbulent 20th century in which it was repeatedly almost silenced yet in which it always, just as in recent years, returned to the forefront in one way or another.

Torben Philipp

Affective Memory in State Socialism: Nostalgic Explorations of the past during the Era of Stagnation

Numerous recent research projects and publications have taken as their subject Post-Soviet Nostalgia. In particular, the era of the Brezhnev regime has become the object of a “warm” and romanticising Russian culture of memory. The seemingly easily decipherable Soviet universe and the imaginary coziness of the “Vanished Empire” are ubiquitous objects of privatized (or even state-promoted) longings for Soviet childhood and the “Golden age of Stagnation” in 21st century Russia.

Less well-known, however, are the ways in which the Soviet period of the late 60s and 70s was in many respects already recognisable as a “nostalgic” era in its own right. As era that turns with intensified interest to a wide range of fragments from the past, it engages both restoratively and playfully. The irrevocable disintegration of Soviet Utopia (as well as the constantly growing Soviet modernization pressure) in “developed socialism” after the Prague spring led to an individual and collective retrospectivism and unleashed a particularly phantasmagorical cult of memory.

Naturally, the heightened concern with historical issues during the Brezhnev reign cannot be interpreted as politically neutral. We can observe that the images of nostalgic representation shape a counter-memory against official Soviet memorial

culture on the one hand, while signalling uneasiness with late Soviet modernism on the other. Nostalgia can be treated as a spatiotemporal concept, one that generally involves images of loss. A “present absence” and nostalgic worlds summon highly immersive experiences. In my presentation I will treat usages of nostalgia as both a historical concept and an artistic practice, limned with examples taken from literature, film, painting, and photography. Of essential interest is the way the introduction of such affect-laden time elements to the contemporary aesthetic discourse diversifies and significantly modifies the codes of socialist realism. Through these means, “nostalgic” conventions of representation serve as narrative strategies to extend or vary expressions of art in Soviet aesthetics during the Stagnation Period.

On a more detailed note, the presentation will include: ‚Dark‘ counter-memory, mythologisation of rural space, and longing for childhood in Soviet Village Prose; Stalinist architecture as nostalgic place of memory in Yuri Trifonov; nostalgic intertextuality and imperial ruins in documentary film of the 1970's; devices of “nostalgic” montage and superimposition in Russian Conceptualist and Sots-Art photography and painting.

Owen Molloy (Norwich)

Nostalgia for West Germany: Rationalising the Emergence of Westalgie

Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, nostalgia for both former German countries - the West German Federal Republic and the East German Democratic Republic - has been contentious and controversial for German citizens, politicians, and outside observers. Indeed, considering the success of the current Federal Republic in terms of political and economic achievements, such tendencies to look back to a different time warrants investigation. This paper will focus on nostalgia for the 'old' Federal Republic, a concept otherwise known more broadly as *Westalgie*. It is a general term referring to nostalgia for features of everyday life in the FRG such as economic stability under Rhenish capitalism, political reticence in terms of foreign policy, and compounded with symbols of West German accomplishment such as the Deutschmark

or the Volkswagen Beetle. More specifically, this paper will seek to explain the growing public and academic interest concerning the heritage of West Germany, whilst also detailing depictions of *Westalgie* in mediums such as literature and cinema. Recent public interest in West Germany, from published photo books to museum exhibitions relating to the Bonn Republic, highlights a strong preoccupation with the former democratic state. Yet little has been researched as to why nostalgia for West Germany has come to the fore of public discourses during the past few years. By rationalising such nostalgia, this paper seeks to create a more rounded scholarly understanding of *Westalgie*, especially considering the comparatively ubiquitous amounts of research regarding its East German counterpart, *Ostalgie*.

Jörg Arnold (Nottingham)

The Future that Never Came: De-industrialisation, Nostalgia and the Politics of Temporality

Nostalgia is often conceptualised as the longing for a past that never was. This paper adopts an alternative approach and thinks about nostalgia in relation to a future that never came. It seeks to understand the conflictual nature of de-industrialisation in Britain during the final quarter of the twentieth century, and the retrospective sense of traumatic loss often associated with the process, by exploring the changing horizons of expectation of industrial workers and their trade union representatives.

The paper takes the history of the British coal industry as a case study. It argues that the renaissance of the industry's fortunes in the early 1970s, although short-lived, created expectations for a bright future that can help to explain the determination of coal miners 'to risk their all' (Raphael Samuel) when this future appeared to

be slipping away in the changed socio-political climate of the 1980s. The Great Miners' Strike of 1984/85 derived its visceral nature in no small part from a sense of broken promises about the 'big money', 'good mates' and 'great prospects' that the recruitment leaflets of the National Coal Board had talked about only ten years previously. If the coal miners of the 1980s were fighting for the realisation of a bright future that they felt that they deserved, retrospective nostalgia also derived its emotional urgency not so much from what was, but from what might have been. In short, this paper argues, tentatively, that contemporary 'smokestack nostalgia' is rooted less in the loss of an industrial past as it actually existed (or is imagined to have existed), than in the loss of a future that never became reality.

Tim Strangleman (Canterbury)

Smokestack Nostalgia? The Work of Memory in Understanding Industrial Decline

Nostalgia is an increasingly prominent concept in critical discussions of the past. While historians are wary of the phrase with its implications of false or

romanticised past sociologists have taken a lead in arguing for a more complex understanding of nostalgia. One of the key terrains on which

nostalgia can be observed is that of industry, work and economic life. The complex and multi-layered process of deindustrialisation which has taken place over the last four decades has forced many to confront the meanings of industrialisation. Some have commentators have suggested that to find value in this past is to fall victim to a 'Smokestack Nostalgia', seemingly oblivious to the negative and destructive aspects of capitalism.

This paper will explore some of the dimensions of industrial nostalgia that have emerged from the process of deindustrialisation. These will include

written and pictorial reflections on industrial loss. In doing so it seeks to examine what this tells us about the wider meanings and values attached to work in the past and present. While it would be easy to dismiss this material as 'simply nostalgic', representing another manifestation of 'smokestack nostalgia' this paper suggest that we need a more nuanced account which asks questions about the continuing desire to reflect back and find value in the industrial past. The paper draws on the author's longstanding interest both in nostalgia and work/deindustrialisation.

Peter F. N. Hörz (Göttingen)

Processions Towards Railway History — On Rusty Tracks: What 'Rail Hikers' Are Doing and What They Have in Mind While Walking on Shutdown Railway Lines

A specter is haunting on shutdown railroads all over Europe: It is the specter of the 'railway hiker', who turns up anywhere, where rusty railway tracks are overgrown with brambles and architectural relics bear witness to the heydays of rail transportation. Some journalists have already seen this specter and introduced it to their audience, stating that rail hiking became to be an upcoming trend. However, in the reporting, it was largely overlooked that it makes a difference whether a cyclist or a hiker uses a bicycle path or a hiking trail, which has been built on a former railway line or a railway enthusiast migrates contemplatively along the spatio-material traces of the history of transport. While a cyclist or hiker enjoys the trip on a nice bike path with small inclination angles, the 'rail hiker' perpetuates the memory of something that has been destroyed by the transport policies of the 1970s. And while

walking along the rusty tracks he is conjuring up the railway's past referring on what he had learned from the books or videos of the extensive market of publications on transportation history. Doing so, the rail hiker is not only committing a ritual by which a glorified past is invoked and alternative realities are constructed, but also drawing up ideas for the revitalization of the shutdown line he is walking on. Considering this ritual to be a performative act in which historical knowledge and nostalgia are interplaying with the physical experience of the 'authentic' place, rail hiking could be understood as a mimetic procession that is not only meant to express close connections to the historic subject of adoration, but also the claim for the recovery of imagined past realities. Based on ethnographic research, carried out in 2012/13 the paper aims to shed light on the phenomenon of rail hiking.

Katharina Niemeyer

Amateur Nostalgia on the Web: Remixing Vintage Media Technologies and Content

Nostalgia is a multi-layered phenomenon and cannot be reduced to a simple and regressive longing for former times. As the notion is in touch with individual feelings and collective processes it would also be reductive to analyse nostalgia by taking into account only one methodological approach or one unique disciplinary field. Based on existing research that deals with nostalgia on several disciplinary levels (history, sociology, philosophy, media studies, etc.), this paper aims to show that the original meaning of nostalgia, homesickness, is

clearly related to the current and increasing nostalgia wave: a longing that is no more leading to death but a sort of longing that puts into forefront the questions of social identity and 'home'. In the introduction of Media and Nostalgia, I tried to show that a nostalgic turn has taken place during the last fifteen years: there is not only the state of being nostalgic but also the activity of "nostalgizing" and most of the time people become creative when they do so. Amateur productions on the web (video clips, digital photographs with a

'nostalgic' touch) are part of this creative nostalgia. This paper discusses this amateur nostalgia on three levels. A first synthetic part is dedicated to a theoretical and conceptual discussion of the current nostalgia wave followed then by a brief reflection on the importance of media as triggers and spaces

for nostalgic expressions. The more detailed third part deals with amateur nostalgia and will present an explorative case study of creative nostalgia on the web. The latter is often based on simulations of vintage media forms.

Dominik Schrey

Forgotten Theories of Nostalgia: Prolegomena to an Alternate Cultural History of the Concept

The cultural history of nostalgia seems to be already exhaustively described: Countless articles, books and introductory chapters tell the story of the semantic shift from the pathological homesickness in European armies of the 17th and 18th century to the rather vaguely defined global longing for a (potentially idealized or imagined) past. Considered a historicist attempt to appropriate a missing past by superficially recreating its styles, the 'new nostalgia' was regarded by neo-Marxist thinkers as almost as dangerous as the original fatal disease Johannes Hofer 'invented'. As Turner and Stauth (1988) argue, this pessimistic understanding of nostalgia itself follows what they call the "nostalgic paradigm" in cultural theory. However, more recent theories of nostalgia emphasise the critical or reflective potential of the concept, and reinterpret it as a „nostalgia for what could have been“ (Boym 2001). In Boym's perspective, nostalgia is an

inverted utopia and looks back at past futures and their lost potential.

In many regards, her concept has been anticipated by Friedrich Schiller's *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (1795) which I intend to present as the first true theory of modern nostalgia and its paradoxical logic. Based on that finding, I will show that, contrary to the prevalent meaning, nostalgia as a concept didn't fall into oblivion and then have a 'surprising' comeback in the second half of the 20th century. On the contrary, it figures quite prominently in various discourses of the early 20th century. The aim of my paper is thus to shed some light on these dark spots of the cultural history of nostalgia in order to construct an alternative to its common narrative, focussing on French philosopher Georges Palante's forgotten essay *Nostalgie et Futurisme* (1916) and other texts that have not yet received the academic attention they deserve in the context of nostalgia theory.

Gintare Malinauskaite

Vilne Nostalgia in New York: Visual Memories of the Lithuanian Jews after the Shoah

In the pre-war years, Vilne was considered *Jerusalem de Lita*, namely, the centre of Eastern European Jewry. However, after the Second World War, all this Jewish life and its cultural heritage were destroyed. Vilne turned into a place of ruins. The physical return became impossible. Survivors, many of whom after the Shoah went to New York, feared to come back and discover only ghosts from their past. Therefore, bodily return to a homeland was substituted by the visual come back. Images started to be used as weapons against the destruction of the Jewish life in Vilne. It was New York, where Lithuanian Jews started to publish albums commemorating Vilne and where the visual memories remain significant until today, including the film *The World Was Ours* (dir. Mira Jedwabnik

van Doren, 2006), made in New York, and filled with community and family photographs from Vilne. Photographs, which were retrieved by the survivors, became an important symbol signaling the pre-war life, documenting loss and turning into a medium which enables Vilne Jews to return home. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyze how Vilne images are used by Lithuanian Jews in New York not only to remember homeland but also as a source of mourning and as tool of rebuilding the life which was demolished.

Vilne memories will be analyzed through the concept of nostalgia, which could be perceived as the deterritorialized nostalgia for an imagined homeland. Vilne Jews in New York feel having lost their homeland forever as a physical place, what

they long for now is more a spiritual homeland which is present solely in their minds and their memories. Nostalgia is not anymore associated with the longing to return home but with the longing of the lost time. Vilne Jews in New York through their visual memories are engaged with both “reflective nostalgia” and “restorative nostalgia,” the latter

form of longing, according to Boym “stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home.” Thus visual memories bring back to the past, diminish the distance, by visually bridging that separation, and allows to recreate Vilne community of their memories.

Reinhild Kreis

Mixed feelings: Do It Yourself, Nostalgia, and Social Reform in Twentieth Century Germany

In industrialized mass consumer societies, techniques of do-it-yourself (DIY) (as opposed to ready-made commercial products) were frequently linked to notions of the „good old times“, and a critical stance towards modern consumer society. Scholars of material culture have emphasized the role of nostalgia in this context and they have pointed to nostalgia as a coping mechanism in a world of increasingly ephemeral consumer goods. They neglect, however, that the nostalgic recourses to seemingly “outdated” practices frequently went hand in hand with ideas on how to advance reforms in order to both react to change and to shape the future. Turning towards the past, I argue, has been both an expression of sentimentality in face of rapid change and a forward-looking part of the reform agenda of various social movements. My presentation takes the perspective of „looking back into the future” as a starting point to investigate the interrelation of nostalgic feelings towards the past and quite pragmatic assessments of the present and the future. I will focus on two periods of intensified debates regarding DIY practices: the turn of the century around 1900, and the 1970s to early 1980s. Both periods were marked by a sense of crisis and social anxiety regarding the development of material consumption.

Around 1900, as mass-produced industrial goods began to spread, debates revolved around the education of children, the working class, and women with regard to such practical skills as manual labor, needlework, or cooking. Here, nostalgic images and “invented traditions” of a pre-industrialized world and of traditional families went hand in hand with emancipatory attempts by social reformers to educate future consumers who were informed about materials and qualities.

During the 1970s and 1980s, DIY practices were part of alternative lifestyles, but could also draw on a fully established commercial DIY business. The recourse to traditional techniques such as knitting, home construction and cooking was both a commercial market and a way for consumers to gain independence or to change existing market structures. Here, nostalgia comes into view as a marketing strategy and as a lifestyle segment. Many in the alternative milieu, however, drew on traditional techniques not in order to return to a pre-industrial past, but rather to build a better future that was different from both the present and the past.

In this perspective, recourses to traditional forms of material culture emerge as hybrids between sentimental nostalgia and repositories for reform in times of profound social and economic challenges.

Eva C. Heesen

Nostalgia as Escapism: An Invaluable Tool for Museums

For many historians playing on people’s emotions and simplifying reality by painting black-and-white pictures is counter-intuitive. However, for historians working in museums emotional representations and easily tangible constructs of historical events, frameworks and developments are a potent tool when trying to attract visitors. Nostalgia and museums are caught in a state of mutual

dependency: museums feed on people’s apparent need for nostalgic visions of the past while at the same time fostering their longing for it. The way in which exhibitions ‘sell history’ is crucial for a museum’s continued inflow of visitors and experience shows that topics which resonate with the public on an emotional level tend to be ‘best-sellers’.

This paper argues for nostalgia as escapism, an often indistinct longing for a recognisable yet markedly different version of reality. Coincidentally, this reality is unfailingly recognised as lying in the past. The ‘good old times’-theme evokes a vision of the past which historians know does not faithfully mirror reality. Yet, the need to escape certain woes of modern reality drives people to look to the past for an improved ‘feel-good’ version of their world. These can range from ideas of a simpler world to that of an allegedly glorious past. The paper

further argues that nostalgia, as form of escapism, is not exclusively triggered by topics with a positive connotation. Exhibitions covering themes of war and destruction appeal to people on a grand scale and evoke a nostalgic longing which does by no means equal the wish to personally live through the experience. Nostalgia essentially relates to imagined realities.

The paper will use some of the latest exhibitions held at the Historical Museum in Hanover as examples to back up the theses.

Kerstin Stamm

Future Shock? European Heritage Conservation and Nostalgia for the Past in the 1970s

I suggest to explore nostalgia from the perspective of heritage conservation. During the 1970s, international and national activities to preserve architectural heritage reached a significant peak in their history after World War II. My aim is a deeper look into the causes, motivations and aims of the “conservation movement” (Glendinning) of that time in Europe and their relation to nostalgia. Can we trace nostalgia in the then exponentially growing interest in the past? If, as I shall demonstrate, there actually is a significant link to nostalgia in the 1970s’ “heritage” preservation, what conclusions can we draw for how we to relate to the past today, for architectural conservation – and for our notion of nostalgia?

Understanding 20th century’s nostalgia non-judgmentally as referring to a time passed, I consequently want to challenge the notion that heritage conservation “naturally” relates to the past, more precisely: to *time*. Nevertheless, the 1970s’ conservation politics were characterised by a distinctive, explicit reference to “the past”. Shortly

after the adoption of the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Council of Europe declared the year 1975 the European Architectural Heritage Year. Its motto of a “Future for Our Past” was echoed widely in the actions that participating countries took to improve awareness about heritage conservation. Yet that past was hardly ever defined; the equation of *historic architecture* with “the past” appeared to be self-evident. This peculiar shortcut between *space* and time is, I believe, of crucial importance for insights into the changes nostalgia underwent.

In a critical approach to the conservation movement, I suggest bringing together nostalgia’s primordial relation to space with conservation-thinking’s reference to time. A “sentimental yearning for the past” hardly describes the 1970s’ vigorous engagement to protect the built environment. Who felt “nostalgic” and for what exactly?

Karl B. Murr (Augsburg/München)

The Function of Nostalgia in Jean Baudrillard’s *System of Objects*

In his dissertation “The System of Objects”, published in 1968, the sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard conducts a phenomenological examination of the consumer behavior newly arising in Western societies following the Second World War using the example of „Structures of Interior Design“ (15). The French scholar sees the capitalist society of his era more strongly characterized by the consumption of such everyday

items, which offer a „faithful image of the familial and social structures“ (15), than by the industrial production conditions. In a separate chapter, Baudrillard addresses the phenomenon of “nostalgia” which he sees as being at work in the human dealings with „unique, baroque, folkloric, exotic and antique objects“ (73).

Baudrillard's analysis of the nostalgic handling of old things draws from the methodologies of neo-

Marxism, psychoanalysis and (post-)structuralism. Inspired particularly by semiology, the French philosopher is interested not in the things themselves, but rather in the „system of meanings“ (4) of these objects imbued with symbolic value, mythological power, historicity and authenticity. Moving beyond Karl Marx' idea of the exchange value of commodities, Baudrillard draws out the “sign value” of nostalgic objects which is rooted primarily in an equally atmospheric and diffuse historicalness. „The antique object no longer has any practical application, its role being merely to signify.” (74) However, in this role – for Baudrillard a deeply manipulative one – the old objects, as well as the timeless functional ones,

merely fulfill their task in the modernization of mankind by completing the consumerism, driven by advertising, of a capitalist society.

The proposed paper attempts to pinpoint Baudrillard's early diagnosis and interpretation of the function of the nostalgic handling of objects against the background of his methodological premises and to scrutinize his critique of consumerism, which claims to identify an alienation of man from nostalgically loaded objects. A comparison with other considerations of nostalgia from the period involving a critique of consumerism, for example those of Theodor W. Adorno, will also serve these ends.

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Arnold, Jörg, Dr; Assistant Professor of Contemporary History at The University of Nottingham; received his education at the Universities of Göttingen, Edinburgh, Southampton and Heidelberg; works on the social and cultural history of rupture and loss in twentieth-century Europe, with particular emphasis on the urban memory of World War II aerial bombing and of de-industrialisation in the 1970s and 1980s. Major publications: *The Allied Air War and Urban Memory: The Legacy of Strategic Bombing in*

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Eva read history and political sciences in Münster, Hanover and Gothenburg, finishing with a dissertation in political sciences on small states as norm entrepreneurs in the EU. She started working on her PhD-project in 2011 and submitted the thesis entitled 'Adolphus Frederick, Duke of Cambridge as governor-general and viceroy of

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R. R. Tolkien. He has won several scholarships, among them a Post-doc fellowship with distinction: “Gerhard Martin Julius Schmidt Minerva Fellowship,” for a research conducted at TU

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Achim Landwehr

Achim Landwehr studied history, German literature, and legal history at the universities of Freiburg, Augsburg, Basel, and Dublin. He received his Ph.D. in 1999, his 'Habilitation' was completed in 2005. Since 2008 he holds a chair for early modern history at the Heinrich-Heine-University

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Mediterraneans: Transnational and Imperial Histories, 2 special issues and published numerous articles and book chapters on French and Western imperialism. She is at present working on a project tentatively entitled *The Cold War, Art, Politics and Transnational Activism during Decolonization* and is co-editing a special issue of *Gender & History* on global war.

David Lowenthal

Geographer David Lowenthal is professor emeritus of the Department of Geography, University College London, and a renowned and prolific writer on nostalgia, heritage, and the spatial outcomes of concepts of the past and future. In several books on the politics of preservation, the meaning and value of landscape, society in the West Indies, and conceptions of nature, he has focused on the landscape and built environment as

palimpsests of cultural attitudes to history. Lowenthal is a medalist of the Royal Geographical Society, Scottish Royal Geographical Society, and American Geographical Society; a fellow of the British Academy; and the recipient of many prestigious awards and prizes. A successor to *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985), widely regarded as a classic, is due in print early next year (*The Past is a Foreign Country—Revisited*, Cambridge, 2015).

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Gintare Malinauskaite is a doctoral candidate in History at Humboldt University of Berlin. Her dissertation analyzes narratives and iconographies of the Holocaust in Lithuania after independence in 1990. Her research interests focus on the Holocaust research, film studies, gender and cultural memory in transnational contexts. Publications include: *From Private to Public Memories:*

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Owen Molloy is a first year research student concentrating on nostalgia for the Bonn Republic. After completing his Bachelor in Modern History, he continued his studies with a Masters degree in Modern European History, both at the University

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In 2013, Achim Saupe was appointed to the post of coordinator of the Leibniz-Research Alliance Historical Authenticity. He studied History, Political Science and Philosophy at the Freie University Berlin (M.A. 2002) and earned his doctoral degree in Modern History there in 2007 with a study on the idea of historians as detectives in the theory of historiography and the representation of history and historians in detective fiction. From 2007 onwards, he worked as a research fellow in the departments "Changing Concepts of the Political"

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Dominik Schrey studied German Literature and Culture at the University of Karlsruhe, Germany. Since finishing his Master's degree in late 2008, he works as a research associate at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). However, he also held teaching assignments at the University of Usti nad Labem (CZ) and the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG). In July 2010, he was a fellow in the Mentor's Program of the IKKM in Weimar (supervised by Prof. Tom Gunning), and in February 2011, he organized the conference "Media – Technology – Nostalgia" in Karlsruhe.

Supported by a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service, he was a Visiting Fellow in the Harvard University PhD Program in Film and Visual Studies (supervised by Prof. David Rodowick) for the fall term 2011, which also gave him the opportunity to discuss his project with Prof. Svetlana Boym and other scholars. Currently, he is finishing his PhD thesis on *Analog Nostalgia in Digital Media Culture* (supervised by Prof. Andreas Böhn, KIT, and Prof. Jens Schröter, Universität Siegen) that also features an extensive re-valuation of the cultural history of the concept of nostalgia.

Constantine Sedikides

Constantine Sedikides' research is on self and identity and their interplay with emotion and motivation, close relationships, and group or organizational processes. He has recently been studying nostalgia and its implications for various psychological processes. He has published 12 volumes and over 260 articles in such journals as *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Journal of Personality*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, and *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. He has received several

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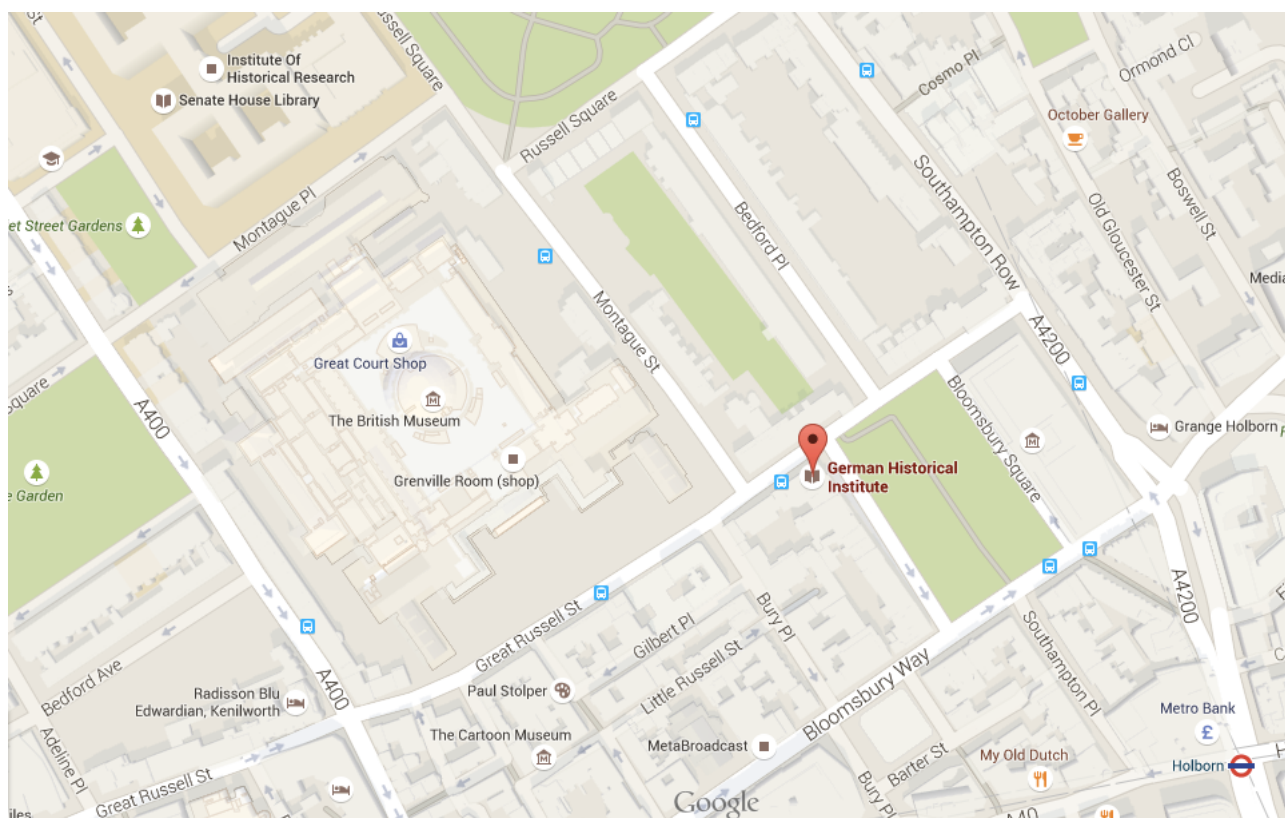
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The German Historical Institute London (GHIL) was officially opened on 4 November 1976 as an independent academic institution to promote research concentrating on the comparative history of Germany and Britain, on the history of the British Empire and Commonwealth and on Anglo-German relations. Since 2002 the GHIL has been part of the Max Weber Foundation – German Humanities Institutes Abroad, which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

The GHIL is the third of its kind, after the Istituto Storico Germanico in Rome, founded a hundred years ago by the Prussian Government to facilitate research into the newly opened Vatican archives, and the Institut Historique Allemand in Paris, set up in 1958. In the meantime further institutes have been established in Moscow, Washington (1987) and Warsaw (1993). Together with the Institute for Oriental Studies in Beirut/Istanbul (1961) and the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo (1988) they form the member institutes of the Max Weber Stiftung.

The GHIL today holds a respected position among London's research establishments. Its present premises at 17 Bloomsbury Square, once developed by John Nash and leased by the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, have been acquired and beautifully restored by the Volkswagen Foundation to accommodate the Institute and its rapidly expanding library.