

Towards an Inclusive Approach?: Theorising Nostalgia through Social Constructionism

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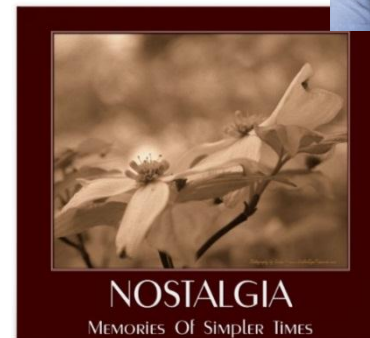
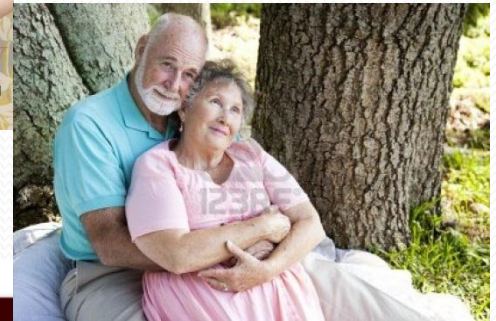


@DefConG



Social Constructionism and Nostalgia

- Nostalgia's different manifestations:
 - Aesthetic style.
 - Memory.
 - Emotion.
- Social constructionism:
 - Rejecting “the positivist position ...[where] language is unproblematically representational, a mirror of ontological reality” (Ray 2000: 26)
 - Extending Boym's idea – nostalgia as “a historical emotion” (2001: xvi)



Social Constructionism and Nostalgia

- Nostalgia as a discourse:
 - Previous allusions – Kuhn (2002), Keightley (2010).
- Features of nostalgia’s “interpretive repertoire” (Edley 2001: 198):
 - “it is *always* the adoration of the past that triumphs over lamentation for the present” (Davis 1979: 16)
 - “[u]ncertainty and insecurity in present circumstances create fertile ground for a sentimental longing for the past, or for a past fondly reconstructed out of selectively idealised features” (Keightley 2006: 925)
 - Expressions of nostalgia mobilising a “regressive narrative ...depict[ing] a continued downward slide” (Gergen 2001: 254).

Primeval (ITV/Impossible Pictures 2007-11)



Primeval (ITV/Impossible Pictures 2007-11)

- *Primeval*, Genre and Nostalgia:
 - Employing conventions of the “temporal contrast” (Burling 2006: 8) time travel narrative:
 - Constructing ‘societal nostalgia’...
 - ...or, more specifically, ‘present-orientated nostalgia’ (see Garner 2012)?



Primeval (ITV/Impossible Pictures 2007-11)

- *Primeval*, nostalgic discourse and the televisual context:
 - Grainge (2000) – difference between nostalgic ‘moods’ and ‘modes’.
 - The context of ITV:
 - Budgetary considerations.
 - ITV’s imagined audience and intended market position.
 - Scheduling:
 - Saturday evenings = family audiences (see Johnson 2005: 133).
 - OFCOM (2008) guidelines concerning child audiences.

Conclusions

- In summary:
 - Discussions of nostalgia need to move beyond solely redeeming certain (ideologically salient) manifestations.
 - Social constructionist approach = nostalgia as discourse; shaped by contextual factors.
 - Case of *Primeval* – impact of various institutional factors shape its discourse of nostalgia.

