CALL FOR PAPERS

Flashbacks

Nostalgic media and mediated forms of nostalgia

International Conference
University of Geneva
Switzerland
13 -14 September 2012

I don’t like nostalgia unless it’s mine
Lou Reed

Send abstracts of max. 500 words, bibliography and biographical statement to
flashbacks2012@gmail.com

Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales
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DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS
May, 6th 2012
Media are time machines. They remember and forget. Media screen and record parts of memory and history as well as they maintain collective memories and contribute to historical narratives by (re)shaping events, happenings or other incidents. Media also tend to remind their own past by re-using archive-images in the present, for example. In this sense, media seem to be nostalgic of the past as well as of their own one. Nostalgia as a concept, feeling or expression is not new. The notion has been introduced by a doctor in Switzerland (17th century) to describe the phenomenon of homesickness. Related to nostalgia is also the idea of melancholia or yearning. These days, there seems to be a BOOM of nostalgia: The Artist (revival of the silent film) or television series like Mad Men - exploring aesthetics and social life of the sixties – are examples of what we could name nostalgic media (makers). Digital photography on cell phones gets a polaroid-touch; the retro design becomes digitized. Advertising for watches or cars is linked to nostalgic forms of family tradition. Fans of the fifties organise parties and fashion events to feel like being part of the past in the present. Being nostalgic and remembering pieces of the past also includes forgetting. What kind of memories are discriminated? Can media really be nostalgic? Which specific forms of nostalgia appear in contemporary society and why? Can people be nostalgic if they did not experience the past they pretend being nostalgic of? What kind of politics of nostalgia exist? What is the impact of nostalgia on the media market and its influence on economy? Finally, given the arbitrary (?) use of the past in all its imaginable variations and cultural systems, is it still possible to use the word nostalgia or should there be a neologism describing the transformation of the past in(to) the digital era? Could it even be possible to be simply nostalgic of nostalgia; finally describing the eternal research for (lost) identity?

This international conference aims to explore nostalgia as a (mass) media phenomena and also seeks for contributions that treat any other mediated forms of nostalgia.

Topics may include, but will not be limited to, the following:

**nostalgia and (mass)media**
- publics, web- and fan-communities
- audiovisual narratives, screening, recording
- seriality, flashbacks and temporality
- news, journalism, (printed) press
- broadcast revivals, archive discoveries
- political past, political systems, (n)ostalgia, institutions
- special nostalgic broadcast (home country, culinary traditions etc.)
- photography, comics, video games and new technologies

**mediated forms of nostalgia**
- architecture, (product)-design and fashion
- psychological aspects and history of nostalgia
- migration, home-comers, homesickness
- geographical maps, tourist attractions and villages
- folklore, traditions, regional nostalgia
- museums, exhibitions and contemporary art
- flea markets, vintage stores and fairs, parties, concerts

**economy, marketing and nostalgia**
- Vintage-retro branding
- retro-design (cars, watches, furniture)
- advertising, marketing and luxury products
- music and arts business

**theories and methodologies**
- nostalgic media studies and critical approaches
- the come-back of philosophers and thinkers “of the past” in science, arts and other research domains

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