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DOCUMENT A

Margaret Drabble, *COASTLINE Britain's Threatened Heritage*
(ed. Greenpeace, Kingfisher Books, 1987)

5 The coastlines of childhood imprint themselves forever on the memory, and I still dream, forty years on, that I am walking barefoot along Filey Brigg, picking my way across the limpets and barnacles. And when I wake, I cry to dream again. So shall we all cry, and cry perhaps in vain. I have never dared to return to the Brigg, for fear that it is already ruined, a paradise lost: for fear that the pink rock pools are polluted, and the rocks covered with cement. But I know that the little fishing boats still wait on the cobbles at Filey and Bridlington, that one can still walk along the dizzy grey grass paths at precipitous Flamborough Head or along the crumbling bleeding red clay earth towards Scarborough. Whole families of fisherman lie still in the churchyard, with their epitaph, 'Lost at Sea', and the children still build sand castles and make sand pies and crown them with little paper flags.

10 When I was a child, the North Sea was so full of fish that we could go out into the bay and catch our tea - codlings, whiting, haddock, mackerel. There was a primal brightness upon everything, a glittering light that fell on beach and cliff and Amusement Arcade and green canvas bathing huts. It is true that we swam among sewage, released nightly, I believe, from a great metal grate in the sea wall, but we cared nothing for that, as we bobbed about and swallowed it down and shivered, goose-pimpled, in the brisk Yorkshire air. Sometimes we went on excursions to faraway places, to Whitby, or Robin Hood's Bay, but the journey usually made me sick, and I preferred the charm of the familiar. I have since visited some of the most spectacular coastlines in the world, but none of them can match the emotional power of that stretch of North Yorkshire.

25 In later years, I have come to know other, more workmanlike parts of the region - Hull, Grimsby, Redcar, the strange inland port of Boston. A pause seems to hang over them, as though they were out of time, forgotten by time. Will time preserve them? The sea washes, the cliffs erode, the sands silt, and the fish have swum away from land. There was once plenty, abundance. Is it one's own childhood that one mourns, as one remembers? The land itself grow old.

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DOCUMENT B

“The Nature of Nostalgia” (in the journal of *Contemporary Psychotherapy*, London- Vol. 5 n°1_Spring 2013) by Zachary Boren

Memories are made of this...Zachary Boren visits and interprets the nature of longing for the past, with a little help from Freud, Geahchan and the Sims signature tune

An elderly man, tall and thin and angular, sits in a restaurant of red velvet. He lifts his head and watches the waiter, a red-haired teenager on roller-skates, bring his food. He looks sceptically at the dish. He is the food critic, with the power to make or break this establishment, yet he has been given a plate of ratatouille, a peasant’s dish. He lifts the fork to his mouth, thin slices of zucchini and tomato at its end. As he delicately places the food on his tongue he is instantaneously moved to another time, to another place. He is no longer surrounded by garish curtains, or listening to the mumblings of the other patrons. He sits at the wooden dinner table of his childhood, quietly crying because he scraped his knee. His mother knows exactly what he needs; she brings him a plate of ratatouille. How wonderful the boy feels, eating like this. It’s as though the food and his mother’s love have made better his injury. He closes his eyes to enjoy his meal. And he is back in the restaurant, in a deep reverie. He drops his fork. What was that? The texture, the aroma, the taste. What Anton Ego, the antagonist of Pixar’s spectacular *Ratatouille* felt was nostalgia, a beautifully complicated emotion. At once, he experiences joy and sorrow, hope and regret.

The word nostalgia comes from Homer and his *Odyssey*, and its parts mean ‘homecoming’ and ‘pain, ache’. In the modern age, nostalgia is recognized as a yearning for something or sometime past, often for one’s childhood. In psychoanalysis, nostalgia is considered not only as a longing for the past, but a longing for an idealized past, for a moment that never actually existed. The screen memory, as Freud conceived, is a combination of many different memories; an inaccurate account of the past in which feelings are included or overlooked after the fact. (I will explore this concept in greater detail later). It is for these screen memories that we long, these idealized moments that we recall, when we hear or smell or taste something that reminds us of another time. It is our sense of smell that most often triggers a feeling of nostalgia: “Anatomically, the nose directly connects with the olfactory lobe in the limbic system – that area of the brain considered the seat of the emotions. The olfactory lobe is actually part and parcel of the limbic system” (MacLean, 1973). The nose’s ability to awaken emotional memories is called olfactory-evoked recall. Interestingly, smell is the first sense that newborns develop. Nostalgia is triggered physiologically but, as a psychological phenomenon, its meaning is far more significant and it “comes from how it relates to our identity and how we maintain congruity between our current and past concept of ourselves” (www.edge-online.com)

Nostalgia, a concept for which memory is at the heart, is triggered by an evocation of something we recognize from our past. We must consider, however, that this moment or feeling that we recall may, in fact, be airbrushed or fictionalized by our memory. Alan Hirsch (1992) wrote: “During the analysis of the transference neurosis, the patient’s earliest memory undergoes changes and divides into multiple components that are separate, definable childhood memories.” Freud even theorized that memories of childhood are instead memories of memories, that the memory’s

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emotional agenda has distorted our impression of the past, and coloured our experiences: “It may indeed be questioned whether we have any memories at all from our childhood: memories relating to our childhood may be all that we possess. Our childhood memories show us our earliest years not as they were but as they appeared
45 at the later periods when the memories were aroused. In these periods of arousal, the childhood memories did not, as people are accustomed to say, emerge; they were formed at that time. And a number of motives, with no concern for historical accuracy, had a part in forming them, as well as in the selection of the memories themselves” (Freud, 1899:322). These screen memories, as he named them, concern “the operation
50 of memory and its distortions, the importance and *raison d’etre* of phantasies, the amnesia covering our early years” (ibid:301). Freud’s screen memories lend credence to the notion that nostalgia is often a psychological defence, that it derives from falsehoods and uses these misinterpretations of the past as the foundation for future behaviours.

55 How and why nostalgia is triggered is key to understanding its purpose and consequence. The feeling of nostalgia is given life by symbols, by an object or a feeling, or something that represents a moment past. These symbols are a reminder of the linearity of time, and they signify something that cannot be recaptured, something familiar and safe. These symbols represent transition.

60 Melanie Klein wrote (Spillius, 1988): “The symbols are also created in the internal world as a means of restoring, recreating, recapturing and owning again the original objects... The capacity to experience loss and the wish to recreate the object within oneself gives the individual the unconscious freedom in the use of symbols”. And this is the crux of nostalgia as a feeling; a recognition of absence. What was once had or felt
65 is no longer. These symbols both remind us of what we have lost and provide us with a moment that we have once again.

Professor Morris Holbrook (2003) explained why certain symbols are chosen: “We believe that there is a critical period, analogous to imprinting in a baby chick, during which we tend to form strong preferences for whatever objects we frequently
70 encounter – say, music, movies, celebrities, clothing styles, automobile designs, or whatever.” That our attachments to objects of nostalgic significance are determined in our formative years, from childhood to early adulthood, is a worthy observation. As such, these objects suggest a return to the safety of home. Hirsch (1992) concluded that the “idealized emotional state is framed within a past era, and the yearning for the
75 idealized emotional state manifests as an attempt to recreate that past era by reproducing activities performed then and by using symbolic representations of the past. Idealized past emotions become displaced on to inanimate objects, sounds, smells and tastes that were experienced concurrently with the emotions.”

80 What does it mean that we experience nostalgia? Do we remember or do we long for or do we actively pursue our past? Of course there is a variety of reasons for and consequences of this phenomenon. For many, nostalgia is a wonderful feeling, a combination of joy of what once was and a twinge of regret that it is no longer. That is healthy nostalgia. There is also a pathological manifestation of the emotion, a compulsion to recapture that feeling long lost. This nostalgia, as Hirsch wrote, “... may
90 be viewed in psychiatric terms as a driving force for actual behavior” (Hirsch, 1992). Nostalgia, for instance, can drive abused children to marry abusive partners because they long for the familiar and yearn for the past, even if it was unhappy.

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DOCUMENT C



Film still of *The Blue Lagoon* (1980) by Randall Kleiser, based on Henry De Vere Stacpoole's eponymous novel (1908), with Brooke Shields & Christopher Watkins (+ baby)