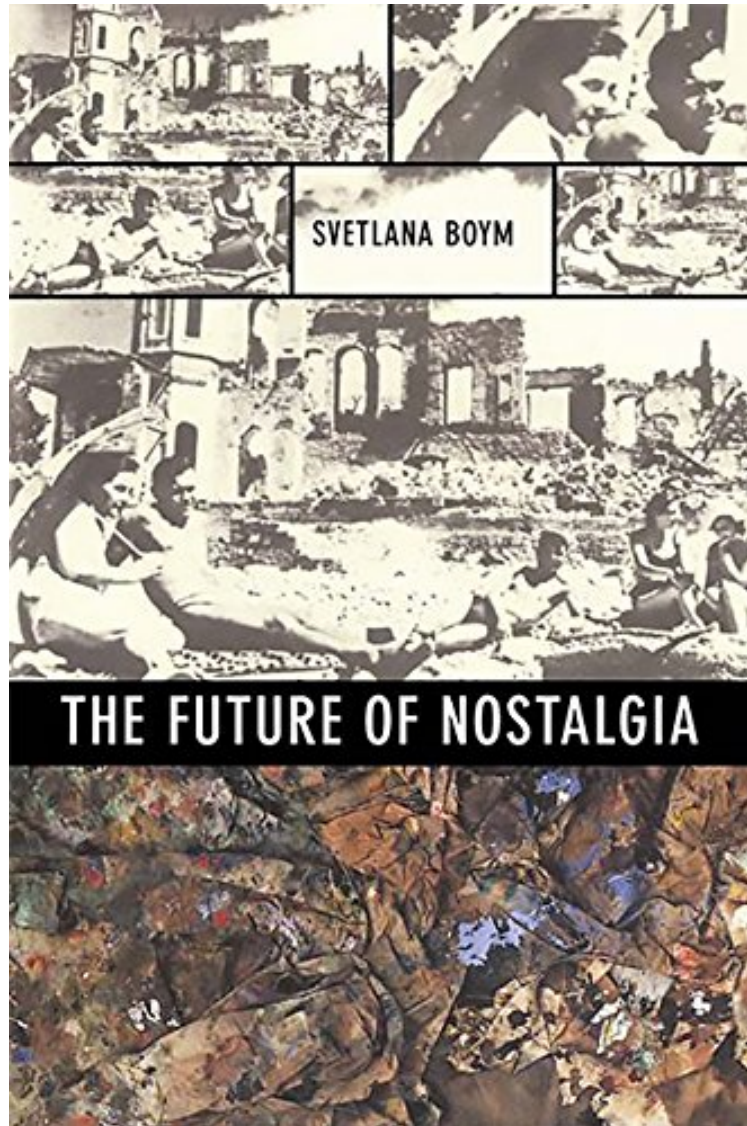


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The Future of Nostalgia

Svetlana Boym

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Svetlana Boym : The Future of Nostalgia before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Future of Nostalgia:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Wonderfully perceptive By Debra Jacob This is one of the best books I've read in a long time -- fiction or nonfiction. Boym is quite perceptive about the immigrant mindset, expectations, and associated nostalgia. Unfortunately, she died only a few months ago. Her obit in the New York Times provides a nice overview, in case you are not familiar with her work. 11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. I Miss Nostalgia and Now I Know Why! By Norman Lipson One of the most fascinatingly themed books I have read in many

years, but once it moved from its major theme, Nostalgia, to the second half of the book, her excruciatingly detailed narratives of the internal issues within Russian cities, quickly became very tedious and boring to a non-Russian. In reality, Nostalgia is two separate books and each could well stand on its own. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Stanley E. Good book

Combining personal memoir, philosophical essay, and historical analysis, Svetlana Boym explores the spaces of collective nostalgia that connect national biography and personal self-fashioning in the twenty-first century. She guides us through the ruins and construction sites of post-communist cities—St. Petersburg, Moscow, Berlin, and Prague—and the imagined homelands of exiles—Benjamin, Nabokov, Mandelstam, and Brodsky. From Jurassic Park to the Totalitarian Sculpture Garden, Boym unravels the threads of this global epidemic of longing and its antidotes.

From Publishers Weekly The future of nostalgia isn't what it used to be, or at least it won't be once this book starts making its way through academic circles. A sort of training manual for the wistful, Boym's book alternates "between critical reflection and storytelling, hoping to grasp the rhythm of longing, its enticements and entrapments"; along the way, the author not only gives new life to an old idea but also offers a number of original terms that can be used to describe the experience. The first part of Boym's study surveys the history of nostalgia as a disease and introduces two varieties, a "restorative nostalgia" that may contain conspiratorial elements (the notion that a certain "they" have destroyed "our" homeland, for example), and a "reflective nostalgia" that leads to a sense of not being able to go home again. Part two deals with postcommunist cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg (where Boym, now a Harvard professor of Slavic and comparative literature, worked as a tour guide in the late '70s) and may be of more interest to pure Russophiles than to intellectuals in general. The book's third and final section examines the work of Nabokov, Brodsky and other artists whom Boym calls, in her most useful contribution to critical vocabulary, "off-modern." Neither modern nor postmodern, these artists (and their ranks include such odd ducks from the last century as Igor Stravinsky, Walter Benjamin, Julio Cortázar and Georges Perec) "explore side shadows and back alleys rather than the straight road of progress." Thus the past may be conceptualized in any number of ways, and apparently, at least according to the author, the only truly pernicious nostalgia is the prefabricated, Disney-fied kind that keeps one from thinking about the future. Otherwise, says Boym, the sky, whether it's the one you see overhead or the one you remember, is the limit. (Apr.) Forecast: This is an interesting addition to cultural history, but a bit esoteric, and is unlikely to find a readership outside of the literati. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The current U.S. craze for nostalgia runs from automobiles (the PT Cruiser) to fashion (the return of bell-bottoms) to television (TV Land reruns). Despite modern technology and conveniences, we enjoy looking back to yesterday. Boym (Slavic and comparative literature, Harvard Univ.; *Death in Quotation Marks*) divides her study of nostalgia into three parts. In the first section, she examines the history of nostalgia, once seen as an ailment to be cured. The second part focuses on cities, specifically Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Berlin, and on post-Communist memories. In Part 3, Boym probes what she calls the stories of exile, looking at the writings of Vladimir Nabokov, Joseph Brodsky, and others who wrote of lost homes. She also examines how nostalgia affects us today, citing movies like Jurassic Park and the subsequent interest in dinosaurs. This multifaceted work gives the reader much to ponder in regard to what we hold dear. Recommended for larger public libraries and academic collections. Ron Ratliff, Kansas State Univ., Manhattan Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Boym exposes the cultural and political dynamics of nostalgia, showing that the yearning for an idealized past can infect not only the individual psyche but even entire nations. In illuminating the ways that nostalgia has helped to falsify history, Boym traces its malign influence on modern ideologues of the left and right. But from literature and art, she gleams a different, less destructive nostalgia, one that reconciles us to our losses and invests our grief with meaning. Omnivorous scholarship yields a subtle typology of nostalgia, with illustrations from Dostoyevsky's novels and Baudelaire's poetry on the one hand, and from Jurassic Park and Revlon ads on the other. Boym's imaginative and scholarly gifts serve her especially well in explaining the mutating types of nostalgia that are transforming post-Communist countries and in probing the complex emotions of immigrants from such countries, exiles at once saddened by and fearful of their lost heritage. Serious students of modern culture will find no better book for explaining why a society increasingly dependent upon globalized hyperspace is also a society awash in nostalgia. Bryce Christensen Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved