

Reading Your Stasi

by Theodore Dalrymple (June 2015)

Nostalgia, that affection for the past that almost inevitably increases with age, is often derided as dangerous or reactionary because it is mistaken for a desire for a return to that past. This is a mistake: nostalgia is not a political programme and would not be nostalgia at all if it did not entail an awareness that the past cannot be returned to, that it is irrecoverable, that Time's arrow flies in one direction only, and that (to reverse the Leninist justification for the most frightful bestiality), you cannot make eggs out of an omelette. And the fact that many people excoriate nostalgia because they take it for a political programme demonstrates just how politicised our minds and souls have become, probably a consequence of the greatly increased size and influence of the state in our lives.

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