

RLI Report
Zoom(ing) in on Nostalgia: The Way-Back Weekender
(3-5 July, 2020)



The aim of this RLI project was to create a community of people in these oddly uncertain times to think creatively and critically about ‘looking back’ while also indulging in some nostalgic ‘throwback’ fun. We had a film night, a musical evening, a book discussion, before [REDACTED] from the School of English gave her closing remarks in the form of a talk titled ‘Brushing Nostalgia Against the Grain.’

The event gave us an excuse to watch some of our favourite old-timey films [and listen to some music](#) that gives us hope – the Weekender playlist is still collaborative and accessible for all and contains music added by our attendees. We then got together on Zoom to discuss how or why we feel nostalgic about these films/music/books and the ethics of such longing. As a host, I found these conversations immensely rejuvenating – it was fantastic to hear people to talk about the difference between personal and political nostalgias, what it means to long for a time

that didn't exist, colonial/postcolonial nostalgias, and more. The events were deliberately spread across the weekend at different times to welcome participants from all over the world: we had people join in from India, US, Canada and of course, UK.

██████████ talk was a lovely way to close the event on a relaxed Sunday evening. She talked about the film *Pretty Woman* and the song 'Sun City' and briefly about BoJack Horseman. Her talk sparked ideas about the politics of nostalgia, and also located it within the ongoing discourse of Black Lives Matter and our role as academics (and non-academics) in the critique of nostalgia. Overall, it was a vibrant event, attended by people from different parts of the world – an upside to the otherwise bleak Zoom business!

I worked with a videographer to make a short film that captures the essence of the event that is attached with this report. I thank the Researcher Development Programme for funding this event and making it possible.