



Image 2: *Evening Landscape with an Aqueduct* by Théodore Géricault

Yet this view on nostalgia was not the only one in the 19th century. Many poets and philosophers explored nostalgic longing for its own sake rather than using it as a vehicle to a promised land. Kant saw in the combination of melancholy, nostalgia and self-awareness a unique aesthetic sense that did not objectify the past but rather heightened one's sensitivity to the dilemmas of life and moral freedom. For Kant, philosophy was seen as a nostalgia for a better world. Nostalgia is what humans share, not what should divide them (Boym, 2001, P.13). In the mid-nineteenth century, nostalgia became institutionalized in national and provincial museums, historical centres, heritage foundations, and memorials. The past was until that moment no longer unknown/unknowable or mysterious. The past became "heritage" (Boym, 2007, P.230).

Back then, during the time of romanticism, nostalgia emerged from strong national feelings. Today nostalgia is still used in politics. Tradition is sometimes used as an excuse to approve or to sustain something. As an example, we can look at the *Zwarte Pieten*<sup>3</sup> discussion. Every year around November/December it is brought back up again. Proponents of *Zwarte Piet* argue that it is a tradition and you can't take that away from them, as if that legitimizes everything. As Boym would say in a very accurate way: "The mix of nostalgia and politics can be explosive," (Boym, 2007, P.10). In the next chapter I will focus more on this time period.

During the end of the 19th century, in 1888 to be precisely, the term nostalgia underwent a particularly significant metamorphosis. In this year Kodak released the first commercially successful camera for amateurs. To illustrate this, Nancy Martha West, the author of "Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia", writes that the camera "allowed people to arrange their lives in such a way that painful or unpleasant aspects were systematically erased," (Rowen, 2017). Ads, of which you can see an example on image 3 (Kodak, 1903), were presenting it as a necessary instrument for preserving memories of children and family celebrations (Rowen, 2017).

3 To celebrate the 5th of December, which is the Dutch *St. Nicholas* holiday, Dutch people gather for parades in which the saint called *Sinterklaas* arrives in town to hand out candy and gifts. But these parades have taken on an increasingly political tone because of Sinterklaas his traditional blackface sidekick. In Dutch tradition, *Sinterklaas* has a "helper" named *Zwarte Piet*, or *Black Pete*, who appears as a blackface character with large gold earrings and exaggerated big red lips. The number of Dutch people who are protesting the tradition of *Sinterklaas* his "helper" is growing (Little, 2020).