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@DefConG

Going Legendary: Merchandising, Transmediality and Nostalgia in *Power Rangers Super Megaforce*

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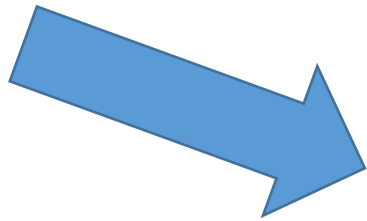
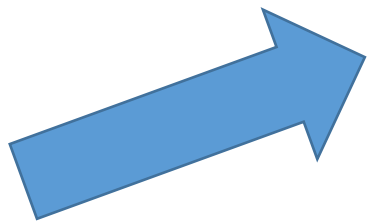
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Introduction

- Research questions:
 - How do forms of nostalgia become constructed in programmes primarily targeting children?
 - What cultural issues do these industrially-located strategies intersect with?
- Approach taken:
 - Nostalgia as discourse.
 - Addressing social, cultural, historical and industrial contexts.
- Case study:
 - *Power Rangers Super Megaforce* (Saban Brands 2014)

SABAN'S
POWER RANGERS
20



Introducing Legendary Mode



Diegetic Codings of Objects



Decontextualized Nostalgia



2

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Power Rangers
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Decontextualized Nostalgia and Imagined Audiences

- Audiences targeted:
 - Fans
 - ‘Child’ = primary audience:
 - “Boys aged 4-8” (Saban Brands 2013: 2)
 - “As they get older, children repeatedly (and often fiercely) reject their former enthusiasms: differences of as little as a couple of years carry enormous significance.” (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2004: 15).
- Adults:
 - Intertextual pleasures (Gordon 2003)
 - Inter-generational bridging.



The screenshot shows an eBay product listing for a 'Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Super Megaforce Legendary Key Pack Green White Red'. The item is in 'New' condition and is priced at US \$29.99, with an approximate value of £21.11. The listing includes a 'Buy it now' button, options to 'Add to Watch list' (1 watching) and 'Add to collection', and a 'New condition' label. The seller is 'ichigokan (6149)' with a 99.8% positive feedback rating. The listing also features a 'Nectar' reward program icon, postage information (US \$18.00), and delivery estimates (Wed. 16 Mar. to Wed. 30 Mar.).

Decontextualized Nostalgia, Adults and Reassurance

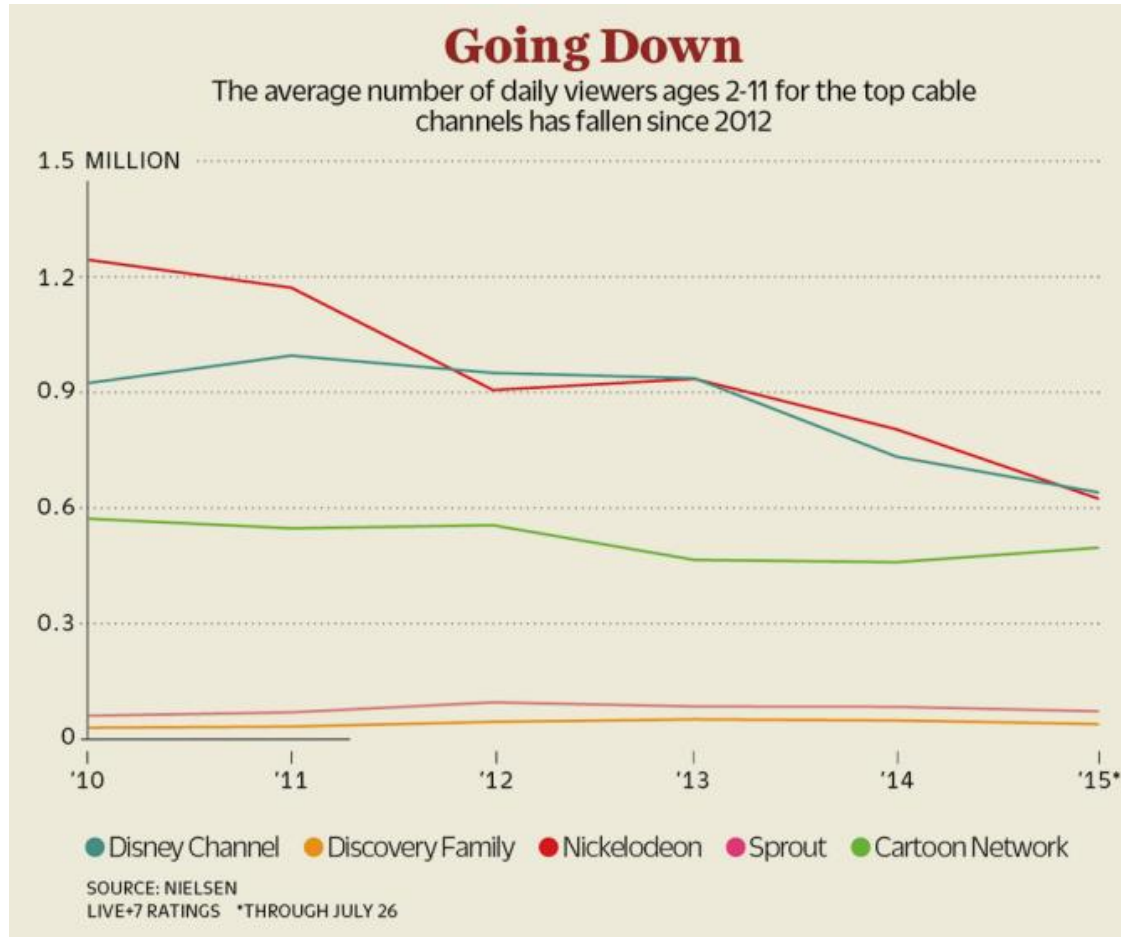
- Useful framework = Giddens (1991)...:
 - Trust in abstract systems = subjective anxiety and powerlessness.
 - Counter this through reflexive self-narratives and ontological security.
- ...but add to this:
 - Davis (1979: 41) on nostalgia and self-identity.
 - Holdsworth (2011) – TV rememberance = show and context.
 - Discourses constructing the *Power Rangers*:
 - Violence; consumerist; aesthetic dismissals as camp, as garish.

Decontextualized Nostalgia, Adults and Reassurance

- Decontextualized nostalgia provides reassurance to parents concerning their children:
 - Re-encountering favoured characters from their childhood prompts memories of their own consumption contexts.
 - Opportunities for constructing stable self-narrative:
 - Rejection of violent anti-social or rampant consumer identities by reconciling understandings of self 'then' and 'now'
 - Eases concerns about child's media consumption and preferences.



Conclusions



- Within *Super Megaforce*, nostalgia becomes constructed in an anniversary series via objects but in a way relating to imagined child audience profiles through constructing decontextualized nostalgia.
- Decontextualized nostalgia moves across integrated licenses (Steemers 2010) via paratextual framings whilst extending Legendary Mode's appeal to adults:
 - As gatekeepers
 - As opportunities for nostalgia
 - Cultural perspective – industrial strategies providing reassurance.
- Wider significance – adults increasingly becoming an important secondary market (especially for Viacom-associated properties) due to current market conditions:
 - Nickelodeon and 'The Splat'.
 - *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* including 'past' characters and voice actors.