



Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates

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Memory has never been closer to us, yet never more difficult to understand. In the more than thirty specially commissioned essays that make up this book, leading scholars survey the histories, the theories, and the faultlines that compose the field of memory research. The volume reconstructs the work of the great philosophical and literary figures of the last two centuries who recast the concept of memory and brought it into the forefront of the modernist and postmodernist imagination—among them, Bergson, Halbwachs, Freud, Proust, Benjamin, Adorno, Derrida, and Deleuze. Drawing on recent advances in the sciences and in the humanities, the contributors address the question of how memory works, highlighting transactions between the interiority of subjective memory and the larger fields of public or collective memory. The public, political life of memory is an increasingly urgent issue in the societies we now inhabit, while the category of memory itself seems to become ever more capacious. Asking how we might think about the politics of memory, the closing chapters explore a number of defining instances in which the troubled phenomenon of memory has entered and reshaped our very conception of what makes and drives the domain of politics. These include issues of slavery, the Soviet experience, the Holocaust, feminism and recovered memory, and memory in post-apartheid South Africa.

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