



Memory, Narrative and Forgiveness: Perspectives on the Unfinished Journeys of the Past

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The United Nations' declaration of 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation is testimony to the growing use of historical commissions as instruments of reconciliation in post-conflict societies. Since the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has had a profound impact on international efforts to deal with the aftermath of mass violence and societal conflict, this is an appropriate time for scholars to debate and reflect on the work of the TRC and the wide-ranging scholarship it has inspired across disciplines. With a foreword by Harvard Law Professor Martha Minow, 'Memory, Narrative, and Forgiveness: Perspectives on the Unfinished Journeys of the Past' offers readers a front-row seat where a team of scholars draw on both theoretical analysis and case studies from around the world to explore the themes of memory, narrative, forgiveness and apology, and how these themes often interact in either mutually supportive or unsettling ways. The book is a vibrant discussion by scholars in philosophy, psychology, psychoanalytic theory, history, literary theory, and Holocaust studies. The authors explore the complex, interconnected issues of trauma and narrative (testimonial and literary narrative and theatre as narrative), mourning and the potential of forgiveness to heal the enduring effects of mass trauma, and transgenerational trauma-memory as a basis for dialogue and reconciliation in divided societies. The authors go well beyond the South African TRC and address a wide range of historical events to explore the possibilities and the challenges that lie on the path of reconciliation and forgiveness between victims, perpetrators, and bystanders in societies with a history of violent conflict and unspeakable injustice. The book provides readers with a cohesive, theoretically well-grounded analysis of the impact of traumatic memories in the personal and communal lives of survivors of trauma. It explores how narrative may be creatively applied in processes of healing trauma, and how public testimony can often restore the moral balance of societies ravaged by trauma. The book deepens understanding of the ways in which lessons from the TRC might be developed and both usefully and cautiously applied in other post-conflict situations.



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