



The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History

David Lowenthal

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Heritage, while it often constitutes and defines the most positive aspects of culture, is a malleable body of historical text subject to interpretation and easily twisted into myth. When it is appealed to on a national or ethnic level in reactions against racial, religious, or economic oppression, the result is often highly-charged political contention or conflict. The extraordinary theme of this unique book is how the rise of a manifold, crusade-like obsession with tradition and inheritance--both physical and cultural--can lead to either good or evil. In a balanced account of the pros and cons of the rhetoric and spoils of heritage--on the one hand cultural identity and unity, on the other, potential holy war--David Lowenthal discusses the myriad uses and abuses of historical appropriation and offers a rare and accessible account of a concept at once familiar and fraught with complexity. David Lowenthal is Emeritus Professor of Geography at University College London, and the author of the bestselling *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985)

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