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Symbolic Loss : The Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century's End

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Historically, many world cultures have linked three disparate phenomena: collective loss; mourning; and the construction of monuments and cultural symbols to represent the loss over time and render it memorable, meaningful,and thereby bearable. In a century of great loss, observers of western culture have commented on the decline of mourning practices and the absence of their associated rituals. The ten essays assembled here by Peter Homans represent, in a genuinely interdisciplinary way, the recent work of scholars attempting to understand this trend. Arranged in sections on cultural studies, architecture, history, and psychology, this accessible collection can serve as an introduction to the uses of mourning in contemporary cultures.

Contributors:Paul A. Anderson, University of MichiganDoris L. Bergen, University of Notre DameMitchell Breitwieser, University of California, BerkeleyPeter Homans, University of ChicagoPatrick H. Hutton, University of VermontMarie-Claire Lavabre, National Institute for Scientific Research, ParisPeter C. Shabad, Northwestern University Medical School and Columbia Michael Reese Hospital and Medical CenterLevi P. Smith, Art Institute of ChicagoJulia Stern, Northwestern UniversityJames E. Young, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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