The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited

David Lowenthal
University College London

About the Book

The past remains essential – and inescapable. A quarter-century after the publication of his classic account of man’s attitudes to his past, David Lowenthal revisits how we celebrate, expunge, contest and domesticate the past to serve present needs. He shows how nostalgia and heritage now pervade every facet of public and popular culture. History embraces nature and the cosmos as well as humanity. The past is seen and touched and tasted and smelt as well as heard and read about. Empathy, re-enactment, memory and commemoration overwhelm traditional history. A unified past once certified by experts and reliant on written texts has become a fragmented, contested history forged by us all. New insights into history and memory, bias and objectivity, artefacts and monuments, identity and authenticity, and remorse and contrition, make this book once again the essential guide to the past that we inherit, reshape and bequeath to the future.

About the Author

David Lowenthal is Emeritus Professor of Geography and Honorary Research Fellow at University College London. He is a gold medallist of the Royal Geographical, the Royal Scottish Geographical and the American Geographical Societies, a Fellow of the British Academy and honorary D.Litt. Memorial University of Newfoundland. In 2010 he was awarded the Forbes Lecture Prize by the International Institute for Conservation. His books include The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History (1996), George Perkins Marsh, Prophet of Conservation (2000) and The Nature of Cultural Heritage and the Culture of Natural Heritage (2005).
The Past Is a Foreign Country
Revisited
David Lowenthal

Key Features

• Examines mankind’s relationship with his past

• Draws on all the arts, the humanities and the social sciences, and on diverse sources such as science fiction and psychoanalysis, to show how rebellion against tradition has given rise to the modern cult of preservation and pervasive nostalgia

• Incorporates new ways of seeing and engaging with the past from archaeology and museum display to re-enactments and The History Channel

Contents