



Vital Memory and Affect: Living with a difficult past

Steven Brown, Paula Reavey

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Vital Memory and Affect takes as its subject the autobiographical memories of 'vulnerable' groups, including survivors of child sexual abuse, adopted children and their families, forensic mental health service users, and elderly persons in care home settings. In particular the focus is on a particular class of memory within this group: recollected episodes that are difficult and painful, sometimes contested, but always with enormous significance for a current and past sense of self. These 'vital memories', integral and irreversible, can come to appear as a defining feature of a person's life.

In *Vital Memory and Affect*, authors Steve Brown and Paula Reavey explore the highly productive way in which individuals make sense of a difficult past, situated as they are within a highly specific cultural and social landscape. Via an exploration of their vital memories, the book combines insights from social and cognitive psychology to open up the possibility of a new approach to memory, one that pays full attention to the contextual conditions of all acts of remembering.

This path-breaking study brings together a unique set of empirical material and maps out an agenda for research into memory and affect that will be important reading for students and scholars of social psychology, memory studies, cultural studies, philosophy, and other related fields.

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