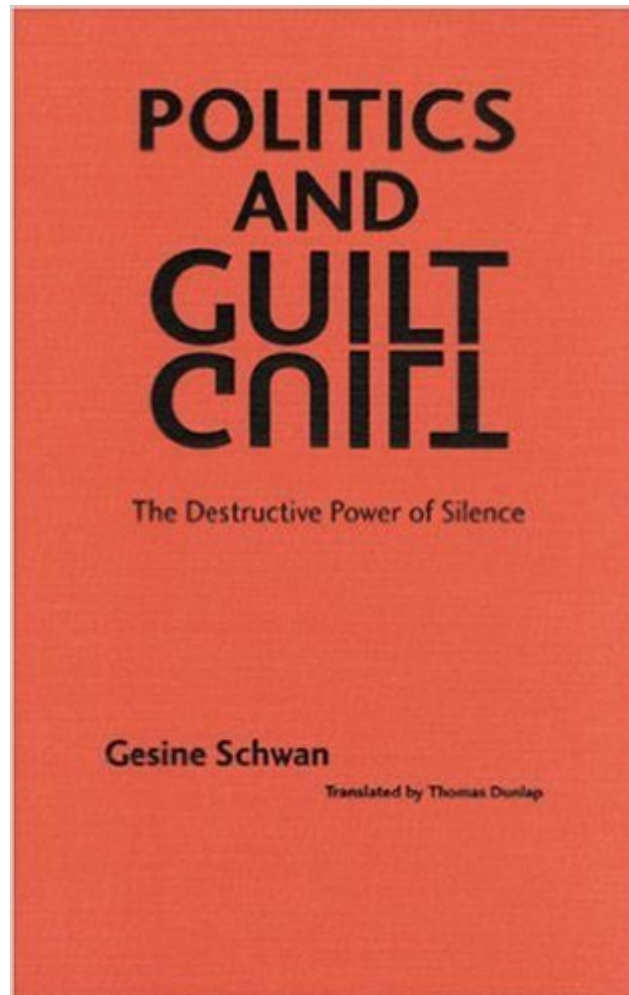


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Politics And Guilt: The Destructive Power Of Silence (European Horizons Series)



Synopsis

Politics and Guilt sheds new light on our understanding of the pervasive psychological and cultural effects of Nazism by examining the power of guilt in modern Germany. Usually seen as a psychological and intensely personal phenomenon, the effect of guilt on the collective arena of politics has been downplayed or misunderstood by many political scientists. Taking issue with Hannah Arendt, Daniel Goldhagen, and Hermann Löffel, Gesine Schwan argues that Germans must confront their Nazi past because the repression or lack of acknowledgment of guilt damages modern democracies. The Nazi perpetrators were not above the norms of good and evil, she asserts, but were conscious of their guilt and silent about it. The widespread psychological guilt in them and their descendents has adversely affected perceptions of political responsibility, marriage, and child rearing in modern Germany. At a moment when past crimes are being exposed, reparation demands are increasingly common, and world leaders are apologizing and making amends for past mistakes and injustices, Schwan's analysis is timely and thoughtful, standing as the most sophisticated consideration of guilt in politics to date.

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