
One of the most productive trends in early modern scholarship of the last decade has been a deliberate turn toward memory. The editors of *The Arts of Remembrance in Early Modern England*, cognizant of this movement, dutifully survey the terrain from Yates to Carruthers and then cover the range of newer approaches in books by, among others, Hiscock, Sullivan, and Engel, and in important collections of essays, most notably, *Ars Reminiscendi: Mind and Memory in Renaissance Culture* by Beecher and Williams, and *Forgetting in Early Modern English Literature and Culture: Lethe’s Legacies* by Ivic and Williams. In this regard, the first chapter is a faithful introduction to the volume; the editors deftly navigate a course through a sea of studies concerned with the place of ecclesiastical practices and theatre in constructing and revising notions of national and civic memory and identity. Moreover they use Duke Humfrey’s tomb, coupled with key writings about it, as an exemplary case study that sets the tone for the essays that follow, each considering different forms of remembrance of the dead which emerged out of the Reformation.

Gordon and Rist, especially in the light of their notable work previously undertaken on commemorative structures and social history in early modern Britain, are singularly well suited to undertake this project on the cultural enactments of remembrance—both as editors and contributors. Andrew Gordon, for example, offers a triumphant final essay on the liminal figures of the ghost and the fool, as regards comic remembrance and reformation practices; and Thomas Rist’s double-edged essay on Herbert’s “Poetic Materials” stands as a magisterial centerpiece to this volume, which showcases the diverse spectrum of remembrance practices at work in the shadow of the English Reformation. And yet, much to the credit of the critically reflective stance assumed by all of the contributors, each essay takes into account the problems attending the term “Reformation,” acknowledging that remembrance in the seventeenth century was never a neutral activity. By providing different perspectives on the manner and extent to which
religious engagement was involved, this collection brings to light some very specific ways that a variety of cultural productions are rooted in the arts of remembrance.

And so, appropriately, the Eucharist, seen as a touchstone for the arts of remembrance, is reflected in the structure of the book, beginning with an examination by Lucy Wooding of the relation between the Eucharist and other forms of remembrance associated with, and made manifest through, social and community practices of the period. Other essays in this part, likewise concerning “Materials of Remembrance,” tease out remembrance, in terms of materialized theological engagement, by scrutinizing the place of the secular in early modern society. Robert Tittler focuses on portraiture; Tara Hamling on monumental fixtures and furnishings in domestic interiors, making good use of eight extremely well-chosen illustrations, including Izaak Walton's cupboard in a riveting account of his favored strategies for material remembrance (70); and Oliver Harris casts an attentive antiquarian eye on the appropriations of ancestry in stone and parchment.

The second part, on “Textual Rites,” begins with Thomas Rist’s excursus on Herbert as the preeminent poet of “churchly monuments,” or, as he frames it more in line with the thematic concerns of this volume, “Christian-material remembrance” in English literature. His close readings of “The Altar” and “Easter Wings” in particular raise key questions that challenge the reader of Herbert’s poetry to “think carefully about what ‘being metaphorical’ really means” (121). This essay foregrounds the monumental materials of religion (as they were found in seventeenth-century churches), even as it presents, in clear terms, the conflict over whether the place of such material in religion should be metaphorical, real, or both simultaneously. Three other essays round out this section: Tom Healy on the considerable impact of Foxe’s anxiously revised Acts and Monuments over four editions; Gerard Kilroy on the memory of the poet and first Jesuit martyr, Edmund Campion (including the 1584 plate showing two bound priests made to watch him being tortured on the rack), argues convincingly that the Elizabethan theatre of punishment played to a much wider and more discriminating audience than merely its Catholic opponents; and Marie-Louise Coolahan on literalized memorialization and the posthumous construction of female authorship as a form of life-writing,
where “acts of copying and circulation themselves are performances of remembrance” (176).

The third and final part of the volume focuses on “Theatres of Remembrance,” launched by Philip Schwyzer’s treatment of Shakespeare’s arts of reenactment, focusing primarily on Henry at Blackfriars and Richard at Rougemont. Janette Dillon’s subtle treatment of “Scenic Memory,” although concerned initially with reading scenic moments in relation to earlier “stage-pictures” (where iconicity may be absent or less explicitly evoked), raises larger questions beyond what certain tableaux and their re-arrangement and displacement in various plays might have conjured up in the audience’s mind. Put simply: What, in the context of the Reformation, was collective memory? Drawing on the foundational theories of Aby Warburg and Maurice Halbwachs, as well as on the more recent work of Yael Zerubavel, this essay persuasively contends that a staged moral image, such as Avarice personified, in effect is recreated and reinvented over time to become subject to conflict and excess. For an audience that has moved “from a unitary Christianity to become part of a church bitterly divided against itself, the icon no longer speaks with a single voice” (199). Rory Loughnane’s essay on artificial figures and the staging of remembrance in Webster’s Duchess of Malfi considers, among other things, the practicality of whether wax figures (of the Duchess’s husband and children) were constructed and presented on stage—probably not, given the unnecessary expense this would have incurred (226). What is of greater interest here, though, is his incisive treatment of the bewildering suspension of disbelief required of the audience while watching the players of those roles pretend to be artificial figures. Loughnane perspicaciously sees this as an innovation on Webster’s part: to draw together two familiar practices of meta-theatre; namely, the display of suddenly revealed or misrecognized dead bodies and the dramatized practice of remembrance. Meticulously and judiciously examined here, the allusive and illusive qualities of Webster’s staging of this pivotal scene “offers a paradigm of theatre as remembrance of the dead” (212). And, finally, as already mentioned, Andrew Gordon’s essay on the comic afterlife and the afterlife of comedy brings the collection to a satisfying conclusion. Especially noteworthy is the attention given to the famous Elizabethan clown and fool Richard Tarlton, whose death
would cast a long shadow over the comic culture of the age” (231). The collection thus comes full circle with Gordon’s subtle treatment of how comic remembrance of the dead encompasses a wider frame of reference than the shifting ground of doctrine, especially as regards the belief in Purgatory.

An eight-page bibliography covers the main secondary sources quoted throughout, and a five-page index supplies the names and topics of greatest interest to most readers, given the ample range of themes covered. But what makes this book truly valuable to students, teachers, and researchers of English literature and cultural studies is the high quality of the essays, each in its own right as well as when seen collectively as constituting a coherent area of inquiry involving material, textual and theatrical instantiations of the arts of remembrance. Insofar as each essay represents the highest caliber of responsible scholarly endeavor and presents hard-won and compelling research findings, this book is a significant contribution to the fertile and ever-widening field of early modern memory studies.


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*Negotiating the Jacobean Printed Book* gathers a selection of essays that examine the responses of writers, printers, and various readerships to the policies of a king who positioned himself as the primary source of both earthly and textual authority. Pete Langman’s introduction suggests (indirectly) that the approach of the collection may follow Francis Bacon in selecting disjunction and aphoristic openness—in Bacon’s words, “fragments of knowledge” rather than “methodical delivery” (7)—as the means of conducting the critical discussion. In this volume, Langman suggests, we will read at “the margins, where negotiations and transactions took place.” While this collection of essays, like any proceedings (originating in a conference at Queen Mary, University of London in 2007), may not achieve a unity of argument or equality of interest to any individual reader, its efforts at foregrounding the pressures and processes by which written work