

Andrew Hiscock. *Reading Memory in Early Modern Literature*.

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This study begins *in medias res* as it were, with a careful analysis of how the unfolding of Shakespeare's *Tempest* is framed by coercive acts of memory prompted by keen experiences of absence and lack. Hiscock argues that the main elements accounting for the play's narrative drive, understood as efforts and strategies to structure human experience in terms of recovery and retrieval, similarly animate works of other writers discussed in the ensuing chapters. The critically informed paradigm that emerges is concerned principally with the competition for cultural narrativization. Hiscock succeeds in demonstrating this thesis in large measure owing to his easy movement between classical and contemporary sources. He is as conversant with Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine as he is with Bergson, Ricoeur, Cixous, Deleuze, and Guattari. Likewise, in addition to his careful readings of the early modern touchstones in memory studies (Elyot, Fulwood, Romberch, Ravenna, and Willis), Hiscock summarizes and draws responsibly on modern scholarly interpretations of those works (Yates, Rossi, Bolzoni, Carruthers, and Sullivan). Readers of all levels thereby are treated to a valid and valuable survey of memory studies from its earliest formulations to the present day.

In addition to contributing significantly to this area of study situated squarely in the field of intellectual history, Hiscock offers students of literature useful insights for assessing the works of Henry Howard, Katherine Parr, John Foxe, Gascoigne, Nashe, Deloney, Mary Sidney, Donne, Jonson, and Bacon. His treatment both reveals the ways that such representative writers steadily engaged with memorial debate and also indicates the diversity of reading communities concerned with issues of memory and forgetting. This book will find a wide readership owing to the range of genres covered in the service of disclosing early modern writers' perceptions about the liberties and limitations of memory: erotic lyrics, spiritual biographies, histories, prose narratives, short stories, and scientific treatises. Moreover Hiscock's erudition, worn lightly throughout, enables him to explore the various ways fixations with remembering shaped early modern subjectivity. Accordingly he attends to memory's place within changing theories of epistemology (*theoria* and *phronesis*) as a way to understand the cultural formations of memory. The upshot is an intriguing and meticulously researched account of the nature and uses of both cultural and individual memory.

Although the sweep of this book is vast, the author's findings are sensibly grounded and often quite specific. For example the promptings of memory as articulated in the poetry of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, are acknowledged as belonging to a much larger matrix of cultural concerns with legacies of the past. And yet the sophisticated close readings of poems such as "In Winter's just returne" demonstrate the extent to which Surrey deployed "highly selective acts of memory

as a tactical resource for cultural critique” (38). Likewise the incisive account of *Acts and Monuments*, in which the Protestant martyrologist “never really divorces the practices of reading from remembering” (102), reiterates the textual result of Foxe’s recognition that his work would be competing against other forms of reading matter. Hiscock perspicaciously examines Donne’s wider textual output with an eye toward the “cultural project to fracture Donne’s selves” and marshals compelling evidence that this was an activity in which Donne himself participated vigorously — namely, crafting and responding to “these competing narrativisations of his identity” (167). Such literary brinksmanship, coupled with Donne’s “acute anxieties over the cultural threats of forgetfulness, loss, and erasure” (190), reflects his lifelong preoccupation with how future ages would remember his work, and which, moreover, Hiscock conjectures, ultimately contributes to his survival among later generations. Memory thus is foregrounded not only as a pervasive theme of interest to Donne but also as a source of vexed speculation of his age, especially as regards performative approaches to handling memory, memorialization, and even monumentalization. Accordingly then, each chapter deftly concludes by examining how the writer under investigation is remembered — both in his or her own time and today. This through-thread, consistent with the masterful arrangement of the book as a whole (with its periodic glances backward and ahead to related material in other sections), makes it a delight to read. *Reading Memory* is a most welcome addition to the increasing number of books addressing literary aspects of early modern memory.

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